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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A FOLLOW UP STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

MARY JANE TOMBLIN

Norman, Oklahoma

2000

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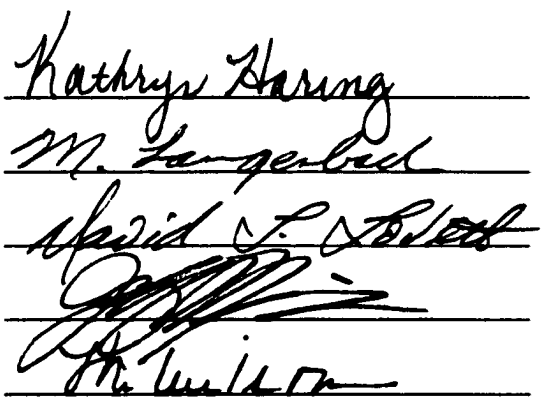
A FOLLOW UP STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY



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"Not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled in this country" (Vachon, 1990, p.7).

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A Follow Up Study of High School Graduates

ABSTRACT

Mary J. Tomblin

Kathryn Haring, Ph.D., Chair

Recent issues in the adult adjustment of youths with mild and moderate disabilities address the new federal regulations requiring all students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to also have in place, an ITP (Individual Transition Plan) by the age of 14. Federal law mandates also that the student be able to participate in IEP meetings.

Based on these new IDEA regulations, this study investigated the post-school vocational and community adjustment of recent special education as well as general education graduates from central Oklahoma rural and urban areas. Responses were from 187 high school participants from special education programs and general education graduates who were randomly selected from Oklahoma schools. A questionnaire administered via the telephone or postal service was the data source. This research analyzed data from participants who graduated from high school between the years of 1995 and 1998. This study was unique from previous follow-up studies in that it asked questions pertaining to the new IDEA regulations regarding transition, self-determination factors, student participation in his or her own IEP meetings and outcomes because of new federal laws. This study focused on the model of transition that exists which delves into other areas of life that define a meaningful and successful transition; not just employment.

Chapter I

Introduction

The adult adjustment of individuals labeled as having mild and/or moderate disabilities while in high school has been an important issue for many parents as well as concerned educators since the mid 1970s (Edgar, 1987; Edgar & Levine, 1987; Sitlington & Frank, 1994). However, few of these studies focused on aspects of adult adjustment other than employment or postsecondary education. Furthermore, there have been even fewer studies that examined these issues pertaining to adult adjustment and how they compare with adult adjustments of individuals who are without disabilities.

Key research studies, which utilized district or statewide samples, indicate that individuals with mild and moderate disabilities, in general, had nominal levels of success in making the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Findings indicate low employment rates and small proportions of individuals attending postsecondary education or training programs. The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS, 1993; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, & Newman, 1993; Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman & Blackorby, 1992; Wagner et al., 1991), was designed to gain a national perspective on the adult adjustment of individuals who received special education services while in high school. This study included sub-samples of individuals classified as mild and moderately disabled.

Findings reported in the NLTS (1998) were similar to those reported in previous studies and also as reported in the most recent study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. commissioned by the NOD (National Organization on

Disability). For example, among those young adults with learning disabilities who were out of school 2 years or less, 59% were competitively employed and 9% earned more than $6.00 per hour. In a 1998 study conducted by Harris and Associates, only 29% of those with disabilities worked full or part-time. Only 14.7% were living independently, with 80% of the young adults still living with family members. Based on empirical data from such studies, the bottom line for young adults with mild and moderate disabilities is that they do not enjoy an acceptable quality of life (U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Halpern, 1990 & 1993; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990).

In 1984, Will introduced the concept of transition planning that focused on developing procedures for helping youth with disabilities move from school to employment. This concept was given further support by a number of follow-up studies (Haring et. al 1990; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Mithuag, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985) that appeared in the special education literature and reported serious concerns about the status of young adults with mild and moderate disabilities, particularly in the area of employment.

In addition to the component of employment, quality of life has become a viable issue and means more than just employment and a paycheck. One aspect of the quality of life issue is that of self-determination. More than 300,000 known self-advocates are asserting that "self-determination is fundamental to being a person, even if it means different things for different people" (Michael Kennedy, 1996, p.38).

The self-determination component is now a mandated requirement for all students with an IEP, requiring appropriate transition planning at the age of 14. It is

also required that students be invited to meetings. While this is being practiced in many school districts, it is not carried out in all situations. Hasazi, Furney, and Destefano (1999) studied the degree to which school districts were implementing the transition mandates. Briefly, what they found was that most teachers (82%) invite students to their ITEP (Individual Transition/Education Program) meetings. Consequently, changes in policy have become necessary for students to be prepared for the future. This legislation also broadened the concept of transition services to include: instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation when appropriate (Frank & Sitlington, 1995).

In 1990 U. S. Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which mandated that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student receiving special education services include a statement of needed transition services beginning no later than age 16, and 14 or younger when appropriate.

There have been an abundance of studies conducted over the last decade and even earlier that have identified troublesome areas for the youths with mild and moderate disabilities. While these studies have contributed immensely to the field of special education and society in general, gaps in knowledge and research still exist. The present study is different than previous studies in that it attempts to address the new 1997 IDEA legislative regulations that were mandated in all Oklahoma school districts. Staff from Burns Flat Oklahoma Vocational-Technical Institute (personal communication, July 19, 1999) indicated that they have not seen a significant impact on the students at their facility in regards to the new requirements. However, this

information was considered to be anecdotal in nature because no data had been collected and analyzed. Thus, a need still exists that research be conducted that evaluates the outcomes of students who have been involved in the special education system of Oklahoma. Robert Blume (personal communication, May 13, 1999) director of the new school improvement program, Onward to Excellence, indicated that future research is needed. When asked if the program worked for students with mild and moderate disabilities, he indicated that there were no studies indicating whether the program was successful with youths with disabilities or not. Other studies (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Frank et al, 1995; Halpern, 1985 &1992; Haring et. al, 1990; Karpinski, Neubert, & Graham, 1992) indicated the need for future research in the area of follow-up. "There is little existing research on the long-term effects of federal school-to-work programs (U. S. Department of Education's Executive Summary, April 8, 1999, p15). Specifically, we still ask "Are youths with disabilities experiencing greater success as young adults than they had prior to the incorporation of the transition requirements into IDEA?" (Sitlington & Frank, 1998).

Since the new legislation has come into effect, a small number of studies (Frank & Sitlington, 1998; Harris & Associates, 1998) evaluated the outcomes of individuals with mild and/or moderate disabilities. Specifically, Frank and Sitlington (1998) draw a comparison between graduates from 1985 which was well after the passage of PL 94-142, but before IDEA and graduates from 1993, a year designated after the passage of transition planning in IDEA. In the NOD study conducted by Harris and Associates (1998), also inferred some comparisons between graduates from prior IDEA in 1996 to after IDEA in 1998.

Legislation regulating the age of 14 as mandatory to begin transition services as well as participation by the student in the IEP meeting is relatively new. Thus, new studies that evaluate student outcomes are needed to accurately identify whether the federal government and educational leaders are making any gains with the youth of tomorrow. Thus, two general questions are posed in this research project: 1) are graduates with mild and moderate disabilities who have had transition services since age 14 integrating into society in a more positive way? and 2) does participation in the IEP meeting by the student yield positive post school outcomes?

Purpose of the Study

Thus far, few researchers have addressed the effects of school implementation of the new 1997 IDEA regulations placed upon local school districts regarding the participation in the IEP meeting by the student and also the law that mandates that all students who have an IEP must have an ITP by age 14. This study investigated the extent of post-school vocational and community adjustment of high school graduates from both general education programs as well as special education programs throughout seven counties. Within Oklahoma, student outcome data are largely anecdotal in nature. Indeed, without descriptive studies, successful continued growth is unlikely (Cuban, 1990). This survey could lay the groundwork for further study of how educational changes occur in one state that is trying to implement the broad intents of IDEA. A second intent of this study is to identify and examine the quality of life for students with and without disabilities who graduated from high school.

Halpern (1985) isolated four domains that must be considered when assessing adult adjustment. They are: employment, living environment, self-determination, and

the social and/or interpersonal network maintained by the person. All four-life domains are explored in this study. A questionnaire was developed based on recent follow-up studies conducted by other researchers (Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Sitlington & Frank, 1991; Frank & Sitlington, 1991).

This study was specifically designed to determine if new IDEA regulations increased employment success for students with disabilities and to generate relationships between students with disabilities and their lives in comparison to the lives of students without disabilities and their lives. Data were collected and analyzed to identify relationships between student demographics (i.e. age, type of disability that exists, jobs, and life events). This study also examined demographics and frequencies of certain variables such as friendships among young adults and also number of children and disability present.

Definition of Terminology

For the purpose of this study the following definitions will be used.

Community adjustment - A term that describes the extent of work and recreational functioning in the community demonstrated by a person with disabilities. It involves the individual's degree of mobility, independence in the living situation, and accessing of community recreational activities. It also encompasses an individual's use of self-determination in any given situation.

Community-based vocational instruction - a non-paid, secondary model that rotates students through clusters of vocational training sites. During this rotation, students receive vocational assessment, instruction, and job sampling as well as

empirical information about their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, and necessary adaptations in a range of vocational options.

Individual Transition Plan - the law (Section 602[a][20]) requires that the individualized education program include

> A statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than 14, and annually thereafter, including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting.

Moreover, this law also mandates that all students in special education receive transition planning and that each student's need for transition services be determined during the secondary education period.

Daily Living - Academic and functional competencies needed to live as independently as possible or as independently as desired.

Employment - Academic and functional competencies and basic work behaviors such as endurance, working continuously, responding appropriately to instructions, and ability to work under pressure. Knowledge of occupational alternatives and self-awareness of needs, preferences, and abilities related to occupational alternatives.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)-The purpose of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is to establish programs to prepare youth and adults facing serious barriers to employment for participation in the labor force by providing job training and other services that will result in increased employment and earnings, increased educational and occupational skills, and decreased welfare dependency,

thereby improving the quality of the work force and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.

a)Title IIC is to assist youth between the ages of 16 and 21 in a year-round program to address the employment needs and skill deficiencies of youth who are in or out of school. The goal is to improve the long-term employability, enhance the educational, occupational, and citizenship skills, encourage school completion or enrollment in alternative school programs, increase the employment and earnings of youth, reduce welfare dependency, and assist youth in addressing problems that impair the ability to make successful transitions from school-to-work, apprenticeship, the military, or postsecondary education and training.

It is the goal of JTPA to serve those most-in-need and most likely to benefit. Individuals must meet federally mandated family income requirements. Individuals may also be required to have a serious barrier to employment such as: basic skills deficient; cash welfare recipient; disabled; offender; homeless; dislocated worker; high school dropout without a GED; pregnant or parenting, if under 22.

After the individual has been determined eligible for the program, a case manager will work with the applicant to determine appropriate training goals, complete an individual service strategy (an employment plan) and find an appropriate training site (i.e., On-the-Job training, Classroom training).

On-the-Job training allows an individual to learn the skills needed to be able to perform at a specific occupational level while receiving a wage. Upon completion of the training, the individual is a trained employee working in a permanent job. The employer benefits through the opportunity to train the individual in the manner and

skills specifically needed by the business. The employer also receives reimbursement for the training costs.

The classroom training program provides an individual with financial assistance to attend a school or training center. The individual can work towards earning certificates in vocational careers such as: business, industrial maintenance, instrumentation, and some health occupations.

b) Individual Service Strategy

The Individual Service Strategy, an individual plan developed jointly by the applicant and the case manager, shall include an employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the applicant to become re-employed and shall be based on the objective assessment that has been conducted.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that an IEP be developed and implemented for every student with disabilities between the ages of three and 22. The law is specific as to what the plan is to include. At the age of no later than 14, the IEP shall include transition goals, objectives and services for the student.

Least Restrictive Environment- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized by Congress in 1997. Regulations for implementation of that Act are being reviewed. However, no changes were proposed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) regulation in the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA. The discipline procedures now will permit a change of placement for up to 45 days of students with disabilities who bring weapons or illegal drugs to school (Proposed Rules 34 CFR section 300.520 (a) (1), 1997).

The least restrictive environment is defined extensively in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This code book contains implementation regulations for federal laws. The LRE regulation states: "(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (CFR Section 300.550, 1992; Proposed Rules, 1997).

IDEA regulations further require that a "continuum of alternate placements" (34 CFR section 300.55 1, 1992; Proposed Rules, 1997) be provided. This continuum is stated in order of least to the most restrictive of school environments, instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, instruction in hospitals or institutions." (34 CFR. section 300.551, 1992 Proposed, 1997). Although Congress created a preference for education within the regular classroom, the continuum was provided to permit other placements when justifiable for some students (Tucker & Goldstein. 1993).

Comments within the CFR further clarify the use of the continuum as it relates to students with challenging behavior stating that in cases "where a child with disabilities is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of the other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the child with disabilities cannot be met in that environment" (34 CFR. section 300.552 comments, 1992; Proposed Rules

1997).

Interpretation of this public law by the states has resulted in uneven implementation of the LRE (Haring et al 1994; Hasazi, Johnston, Liggett, & Schattman, 1994). That is, students with disabilities in one state were far more likely to be placed in separate classes than similar students in another state. For example, placement of children with disabilities in segregated day and residential facilities varied from a high of 15,000 children per million in the District of Columbia to 600 per million in Oregon (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989). This variability has also been documented between districts within a single state (Hasazi et al, 1994). The confusion surrounding LRE has resulted in court cases, that have been decided by the Federal Courts of Appeal. These case law directives have served as guidance for lower courts (Yell, 1995).

Leisure - Academic and functional competencies, interest, and self-expression of the individual that can lead to enjoyable and constructive use of leisure time.

Mild-moderate disabilities - for the purposes of this study, mild to moderate disabilities include disabilities such as learning disabilities, physical impairments, visual difficulties, auditory difficulties as well as mental retardation. As a broader conceptualization of MR is formulated, it refers to individuals with IQ's between 40 and 70.

Mobility - Academic and functional competencies needed to interact and travel within and outside of the community.

Primary disability- The category describing the student's most severely disabling condition.

Quality of life- a term indicating when an individual, with or without disabilities, is able to meet important needs in major life settings (work, school, home, community) while also satisfying the normative expectations that others hold for him or her in those settings. The extent of a person's adult development is related to a high quality of life (Goode, 1990, p.46).

Self-determination- The process of making choices, asserting oneself, self-management, self-knowledge, decision making, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, self-regulation, autonomy, and independence are the salient features of personal self-determination. The term is used to include a wide range of actions that enable people with disabilities to control their lives and their destinies, including choice over personal activities, control over education, independence, participation in decisions, and access to information necessary to make decisions and solve problems, and so forth (Wehmeyer, 1997).

Social Interaction- Competencies needed to participate and interact in a variety of settings in society.

Transition- In the Special Education terminology, transition, can be defined as an important part of normal life. Transition is the adaptation to changes in roles, relationships, and locations. The transition from school to work calls for a range of options that govern living arrangements, career choices, social life, community access, and life goals (Will, 1984). The presence of a disability can make successful transitioning from the public schools more difficult without the assistance of special education transition services.

Transition services -means a coordinated set of activities for a student,

designed within an outcome oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation. The coordinated set of activities must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (Section 300.18)

Vocational class- A classroom situation designed to provide vocational training. Examples may include any form of school sheltered workshop or special education class teaching shop, woodworking, and metals. For some students, vocational classes are structured so that students participate in on-the-job work during the afternoon and attend academic classes on campus during morning hours.

Work Study- the traditional program focuses on proficiency in a single job, and students are paid and considered employees of that company. This is in addition to their attendance at school during part of the normal school day.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The assumption of adult roles is a major task for all youths leaving high school. Also known as transition, it applies to youths with disabilities that may need additional training. Goals are to ensure that students with disabilities are prepared with the skills necessary to fulfill adult roles and to function independently and productively in integrated community settings. From an extensive review of the literature, researchers (Wehmeyer, 1997; Halpern, 1985) have identified transition as being composed of varying facets of quality of life. Initial studies of quality of life focused on economic well being and were found to be lacking.

Economic prosperity alone was an inadequate indicator of quality of life. Thus, while there have been several follow-up studies conducted to ensure knowledge of post secondary life, there have been serious oversights. A major flaw in the follow-up studies completed in the 1980's is the lack of a complete literature review that precedes the reporting of results (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Mitaugh, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985; Wehman, Hill, Hill, Brooke, Pendleton, & Brit, 1985). Because of lack of follow-up data, there is little sense of progression in the area of follow-up research. The present study includes a comprehensive review of all follow-up research involving special education students and legislation that was enacted in the era presented. It does not include research on follow-up data of persons who were institutionalized for long periods of time. Studies were critically reviewed and are presented in chronological order beginning with research from more than 40 years ago.

Moreover, earlier studies that report findings about post secondary outcomes for students with mild and moderate disabilities utilized varying and different terminology than is utilized today. In brief, many of the studies, because of terminology and definitions of the time, use the term of EMR (educable mental retardation) , which by definition today, is qualified under the classification and termed appropriately as a mild disability. This indicates an IQ range of approximately 69-55. The terminology of TMR (trainable mental retardation) is considered the IQ range of 51-36. Intelligence quotient (IQ) is a term used that denotes the range of intelligence of an individual and is signified by numbers ranging from 67 and below to 132 and above. In the preceding explanation, if a student has an IQ of 67 or below, he or she would be classified in the range of mental retardation, whereby, if an individual has an IQ of 132 or above, they would be classified as very superior.

A study conducted by Bobroff was undertaken in 1953 when he compared two kinds of school programs on post-school adjustment. The two special education secondary programs were entitled Special B, which was completely segregated, and Special Preparatory, where academic subjects were taught in special classes and vocational education was integrated with peers who were not disabled. IQ was the main difference between students who attended each program. The Special B students were slightly lower with a mean IQ of 67, compared with a mean of 72 for the Special Preparatory group. The sample consisted of 122 subjects, 61 randomly selected from each group. They had graduated from Detroit Public Schools in 1941.

There were few significant differences found between groups. Employment

was the main variable reported. Participants in the Special B group were unemployed and 5 in the group were not working. Although the Special B group was functioning lower in school, 24% of the group were working in skilled occupations and only 9% of the Special Preparatory group were similarly employed. Both groups were fairly stable in employment and, when unemployed, quickly (within one week) found new jobs. Seventy-two percent of all subjects found jobs on their own, and there were no differences in average wages.

Only economic findings were reported in this study. The conclusions based on employability, income, and economic security indicated that both groups were economically self-sufficient and stable. There appeared to be little impact from integration or segregation of the school program on the employment outcome of the subjects. Data analysis demonstrated no significant correlation's between IQ, achievement, and future earning abilities.

Bobroff concluded that most of his subjects were functioning considerably above minimum standards of acceptability. He suggested that they might possess attributes not considered in determining mental retardation. On the other hand, their success could be attributed to remedial education.

A study of individuals classified as mildly disabled was conducted by Phelps (1952). One hundred and sixty-three subjects were selected from 19 Ohio towns and cities, none of them rural. The students had received at least one year of state-approved special education classes. All had left school in the 1949 or 1950 school year, and none had graduated high school.

The school data generated on subjects was not adequately detailed so that

conclusions could be drawn. The personal interview data was more revealing. One-fourth of the sample were married, twice as many women as men. The vast majority of unmarried subjects were living with their parents. More than 67% were employed at the time of interview, an additional 11% were housewives, and 11% were in the armed forces, leaving 10.5% unemployed.

Eighty-seven employer interviews were obtained. The results were favorable to the mildly disabled workers. The yearly median wages compared well to national averages. The women were paid close to half of what the men received. In employer ratings, 96.2% of the subjects were considered popular or accepted on the job, and 90.2% demonstrated average or superior work quality.

The Phelps study showed a correlation between IQ and employer rating, and IQ was related to the amount of wages earned. The author suggested that IQ might be a useful prognostic instrument, though others would debate this (Bobroff, 1955; & Cobb, 1972). Interpreting the Phelps data is difficult due to a lack of comparative norms on high school dropouts who are nondisabled. The results were generally positive as far as employment status, and little else can be concluded.

In 1966, Thelma McFall conducted a follow-up of East Orange, New Jersey students released from school between 1951 and 1961. The sample included 50 of 78 students who had been members of resource classes for students with mild mental retardation. The remaining 28 students could not be reached. The report did not indicate the duration or emphasis of special education services received by the subjects.

A questionnaire was developed in order to interview subjects to determine

what kind of adult citizens the students with mild mental retardation would become. The main determinate of adult adjustment in this study was vocational success. Only 30% of subjects were working at the time of interview. Twenty-six percent had never worked. Of those working, 30% held odd jobs such as baby-sitting, housework, dish washing, gardening, shoveling snow, and running errands. Three subjects worked with a family member. Eight subjects were factory workers. Seventy-eight percent had received no vocational training. Four had received training and were working in their area of training. The actual figures concerning how subjects obtained jobs were not supplied. The primary method of job search was self-initiated. The second most frequent means by which jobs were obtained was through a family member. Only three subjects had accessed any community services in obtaining work. It was reported that few were aware of services that could have been provided by the community.

Reporting of wages was vague in detail, but generally wages were low. Fifty percent of subjects could not recall what salary they earned. In the case of odd jobs, no set salary could be determined. Five subjects had made more than $40 a week at any time. Eight had made more than $30 a week. This is one of the first studies that demonstrate a negative adult adjustment for participants with mild mental retardation. The author suggested that the public schools did not provide an extensive enough program. She recommended that public schools be responsible for providing vocational education, and that evaluation, guidance and counseling must consider total development. She said that community agencies and resources should be better known to, and utilized by, adults who were classified with mild mental retardation.

The results of follow-up studies became increasingly negative, with some exceptions, as more public school programs became available. It cannot be determined whether the negative results were due to changes in the subject definition, or were due to increased scrutiny of programs for the individuals with emotional disabilities. The increasingly technological nature of society and of employment is a possible explanation. Perhaps it required less in the way of vocational and social sophistication to be employed during the 1930s through 1960s.

A study conducted by Peterson and Smith (1969) compared the post school adjustment of students classified with mild mental retardation (mean IQ, 65) to students of normal intelligence (mean, 103) who were low in socioeconomic standing. A 117-item questionnaire was employed with 90 subjects in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Forty-five participants with mild mental retardation and 45 controls were utilized.

The comparison group received a greater degree of public school education; only 3 had not graduated high school. On the other hand, the majority of the mild MR group left school for work at 16 years of age. The participants with mild MR spent an average of 4 years in special education. Both groups expressed satisfaction with their education.

The percentage of persons with mild MR employed compared to the normal IQ subjects was not reported. A difference in job type was reported, but the numerical magnitude was not. It appeared that a majority of the participants with mild disabilities were in service and unskilled areas. The controls were mainly in clerical occupations. Additionally, they had gained employment sooner after school

and held their positions longer than the mild disability group. No statistical difference in time elapsed between ending school and employment or number of months in position was reported. Men who were mildly disabled had an average of 18 months per position, and the control men averaged more than 33 months. In the case of women workers, the difference was slight, the average number of months of employment for women with mild MR was 36 compared with 37.5 for controls. The sample of participants with mild MR changed jobs twice as often as the controls. Women workers from both groups left jobs for the same reasons: marriage, pregnancy, and undesirable working hours. The men with mild disabilities left work mainly because of finding the work too difficult, layoffs, or dislike of the job.

The wages paid to individuals with mild disabilities were clearly lower. The women with mild mental retardation were paid an average of $19.25 weekly, while the women without disabilities received an average of $55.00 weekly. The men workers also differed dramatically in wages with the controls averaging $89.45 a week and the men with mild disabilities averaging $54.85. Neither of the groups utilized agencies in gaining employment, and few of the subjects were aware of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Service. The participants with mild mental retardation were living in less adequate housing--93% of their homes were substandard. More of the individuals with mild mental retardation rented homes or lived with relatives. A comparison group member was 10 times more likely to be a homeowner.

Participants with mild mental retardation were not nearly as likely to be married as control subjects were. Slightly more than half of the control group was

married, as compared to only 20% of the mild MR sample. The age at marriage and number of children were the same for both groups. The divorce rate for the participants with mild MR was nearly 4 times higher than the divorce rate for controls.

For both groups, more than half reported being church members. However, comparison group members were 4 times more likely to be members of organized groups like the Parent Teacher Association. The comparison group also participated in more group activities such as visiting, picnicking, and movie going. Neither group accessed the public library often.

Greater numbers of the control group had driver's licenses with fewer restrictions on them. The number and magnitude of the differences were not reported. One in 3 of the control groups were registered to vote, whereas one in 5 of the mild MR groups were registered. Approximately 61% of the mild MR group had committed legal offenses, while 31% of the comparison group had violated the law. The report stated that the offenses of the mild MR group were serious, although no examples of crimes were listed. Twenty five percent of the participants in the mildly disabled group served in the armed forces. This is reported to be less than the proportion of the comparison group. No numbers were given and all who served received honorable discharges. There were very few cases in which subjects received aid from social agencies. Two mothers with mild MR and one in the comparison group received Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC).

Reiterating the most important points can summarize the final conclusions of the study. One, slightly half of the participants with mild disabilities were currently

employed. Two, most of the participants with mild MR lived in sub-standard housing. Thirdly, the individuals with mild mental retardation had numerous encounters with the law, some of them serious. Fourth, participants with mild MR were less likely to work right out of school and did not express awareness of social agencies to help them find employment. Finally, participants with mild mental retardation were more likely to have abused their credit rating.

The authors deduced that a more adequate junior high and high school program would amend the problems of young adults with mild mental retardation. An alternate inference is that the critical variables that produce an adequate public school program have yet to be defined. We can also conclude that even with increased time in programs and increased intensity of programming, the young adults with mild or moderate disabilities are not facing significant improvement in employment or living independently. It is clear that these earlier studies did not mention terminology or theoretical concepts such as self-determination. They also did not indicate individual transition practices within the IEP meetings either.

Chaffin, Spellman, Regan, and Davison (1971) reported results on two follow-up studies of students with mild disabilities from the Kansas Work-Study Project. The sample contained a group of 60 students with EMR (mild MR) who had been identified for the study and divided into two groups during a summer work program in 1964. Thirty subjects were involved in the Kansas Work-Study Project. The remaining 30 subjects were referred, evaluated, and selected as controls on the basis of age, IQ, gender, socioeconomic standing, and achievement. A few students in the comparison group were in secondary special education programs, but none were

enrolled in organized work-study programs. Fifty-nine of the subjects were reached for follow-up interviews in 1967, and 58 of the subjects were interviewed again in 1969.

In 1967, 92% of the work-study students were employed. Employment was defined as full- or part-time work, enrollment in a vocational training program, or being a homemaker. The comparison group was 68% employed. These results are confounded by the fact that 3 of the experimental subjects and 9 of the comparisons were still in high school.

Results of the 1969 study demonstrated that the vocational adjustment of the two groups was essentially the same. The work-study subjects did gain significantly higher wages; 73% of them had graduated from high school. Only 54% of the comparison group had graduated, which might account for some of the wage difference. Also, nearly one third of the comparison group was still in high school in 1967; therefore, the experimental group had been working longer. This may influence the fact that the experimental group was employed significantly longer (18.7 months) than the control group (10.6 months) in the job held at the time of the survey.

The social adjustment of subjects was not assessed. Of the total group, 32 were living at home or with a relative. Thirteen of the work-study subjects were living independently versus 10 Control subjects. Three subjects, 2 control and 1 experimental, were living in state institutions. Twice as many (8) of the experimental group were married. It is unknown whether transition programs were in place at the time the students were beginning junior high or high school. Once again, no

significant relationship between IQ and employability or IQ and wages was established. Additionally, no significant relationships were demonstrated between parental occupational status and employability, wages earned, or length of employment.

The authors concluded that the 1969 results virtually eliminate differences between groups. The results suggested that three fourths of persons who are mildly MR were employable without intensive work-study intervention. The goals of work-study should therefore be to enhance employability. This can be obtained through work training in skilled and semiskilled occupations to increase earning potential.

The Dearborn Public Schools in 1970 conducted by the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, studied the question of whether segregated special programs have deleterious effects on the adjustment of adult persons with mild mental retardation. Two school programs were compared; School A was a self-contained, vocationally oriented program completely separate from the regular schools; School B was an integrated program in which job experience was concurrent with general education and courses were not specifically vocational in orientation. School B was more extensively studied and showed superior results. School A was in a more rural setting, and no attempts were made to control for variables that may have confounded the results, other than integration versus segregation. The report included a follow-up on 41 School A students and 41 School B students who had graduated in 1964 and 1965. It also reported on 114 School B graduates who had left school between 1952 and 1963. All subjects had completed three years in the programs. The IQs of the students at school A were reported at a

mean of 72 for men and 78.4 for women. School B was slightly higher with means of 80 for men and 73 for women. The authors felt that many of the students that were accepted late into special education, between 13 and 15 years of age, may have been LD and not MR. The teachers, who were data takers, did not find IQ scores to be useful measures nor valuable in predicting performances at school or on the job. Of the 158 subjects who had scores reported, 24 had known IQs of 90 or higher. There were 12 students for whom only one IQ score was available. They were referred for demonstrating a severe inability to read in high school. This group had a mean IQ of 97. Although group membership is not mentioned in this data, it could be an important variable. In any case, the subjects in this study would be considered borderline to normal today and would not be served in classes for the mentally handicapped.

The results of this study were very positive on employment aspects. One hundred percent of the men who had graduated in 1964 and 1965 from both schools were employed. Favorable work histories were reported on the 112 male graduates from School B who graduated from 1952 through 1963--only one was unemployed and one was in training as a cabinet maker.

The women reported more diversity in employment. The A graduates were 43% married, one was unemployed, and 7 were employed full-time. Of the 15 from B, one was married, one was in modeling school, and 13 (87%) were employed full-time. As women graduates became older, increasing numbers married and became homemakers. This study did not treat homemakers as employed; many studies do, therefore comparing results can be misleading.

Results indicated that graduates from B had better school attendance and higher occupational salaries. They saved the money they earned in savings accounts, and they were more likely to seek further education. These findings were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. Other findings indicate that women graduates earned consistently lower wages than men did. There were no differences between groups in employment stability, methods of obtaining jobs, or living arrangements. The statistical analysis was run only on the direct comparison groups of 1964 and 1965 graduates.

Socially, several group differences emerged. The A graduates were significantly more likely to marry (30% of the men and 50% of the women). Of the total married subjects, the divorce rate was 4%, and 90% of the offspring were in regular grades. Graduates from A reported significantly less illness than those from B. School B graduates were more involved in clubs, churches, and organizations. Fifteen percent of recent graduates from B were in the military and none from A were serving. Very few encounters with the police were described, and all were of a minor nature. But yet again, no mention of self determining skills such as attending any meetings at school to discuss and perhaps, be a part in the decision-making process about post school activities.

The authors concluded that serious consideration should be given to integrating segregated programs. The graduates from the integrated program earned more money, sought more education, and were more involved in social activities. Factors other than the integration of School B could have played a role in the group differences.

In 1972, Gozali asked graduates with mild MR, what they felt the values of special education classes were. The population sampled consisted of 218 men students who had participated in a work- study program during the 1964-1965 and the 1965-1966 school years. The sample contained 72 participants and of these 56 were contacted and interviewed.

The demographics demonstrated an overrepresentation of black subjects (45%) to 55% white. No explanation was given for why the sample was all men. The mean IQ of the subjects was 69. No employment figures were given, but 25% were reported unemployed. Forty-five percent were married and maintaining their own households, and 55% were unmarried and living at their parents' home. The average annual income for the employed population was $3,145.

The participants responded negatively to questions regarding their special education experience. Eighty-five percent perceived it as degrading and useless. Ninety-one percent of the sample responded that they would not permit their children in special classes.

The results could have been confounded by the selection of only men work-study students as a sample. No other educational programs were studied. No descriptions were given surrounding what type of students were assigned to work-study and how they may have been inherently different from other special education students.

Another study conducted by Halpern (1972) investigated the impact of work-study programs on the employment of students with mild mental retardation. Two groups of mild MR students who had been in work-study programs in Oregon were

studied. The first group graduated in 1968 and included 49 participants. The second group were 1969 graduates and held 59 participants. Both were interviewed one year after leaving high school. Data indicated that the 1968 graduates had a 20% rate of unemployment and the 1969 graduates had a 46% unemployment rate. The author concluded that graduates of work-study programs were more successful in finding work than students who had not completed the program. He used general unemployment rates for youth from 16 to 20 years old as an adjusted rate and found the work-study students compared favorably with that population. Also reviewed were the results of 43 cooperative work-study projects that were funded by the Federal Government over a 15-year span. Two thirds of the projects provided usable information, and their data confirmed that work experience programs in high school enhanced employment potential for young adults with mild mental retardation.

A study conducted by Dinger, Myers, and Berner (1973) evaluated the success of high school graduates with mild to moderate disabilities from four different kinds of special education school programs. The programs developed and delivered in Pennsylvania were as follows: The Community-Based Work Study Program, The Academic Special Education program, The External Vocational Program (one-half academic and one-half vocational in orientation and provided by local trade schools), and The Internal Vocational Program, (students remaining in school all day having a special education curriculum with more than 10 periods per week of Industrial Arts or Vocational Agriculture instruction). The study was based on 183 participants (71% of the possible population), and the graduates had left school between 1970 and 1972.

Results indicated that students who had been enrolled in work-study programs were significantly higher in post-high school vocational success. Seventy percent of work-study graduates were employed for 70% of the available time and earning at or above poverty-level index. The graduates from the other three programs were lower, with 39% employment for the Academic program, 38% for the External Vocational group, and 37% for the Internal Vocational program. Only 8 participants were reported in the Internal Vocational group, which raises questions as to the validity of representation.

Female graduates were, regardless of program, unsuccessful in post school vocational adjustment. Only 28.7% were successfully employed as compared to 59.8% of the male special education graduates. These results are not unlike results obtained by other follow-up researchers (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). Also consistent with additional findings (Wehman et al., 1985) were data indicating that most graduates obtained employment through efforts of friends (28%), family (20%), or themselves (40%). Only 5 percent of graduates found work through an agency and 6 percent through the schools. It is noteworthy that while students had to find jobs for themselves (40%), new transition services that are put in to practice today would help with that type of procedure. According to the ITP, many students with mild and moderate disabilities will be eligible for help finding jobs and filling out applications as part of the special education program. The authors concluded with 15 recommendations based on the outcome of this research. They highly recommended work-study for all students with mild or moderate disabilities, in addition to the development of in-school work-study programs. The data strongly indicated that

work-study enhanced vocational success. The careful reader, however, must question whether or not an inherent difference existed in the work-study group that was not explored. Perhaps, for example, more competent students were placed in work-study. The lack of randomness in-group assignment severely weakened this study.

The authors further suggested that post school programs for all special education students should be available. The obvious conclusion, that more attention must be paid to the vocational development of female special education students, was also drawn. Three suggestions were made concerning the social development of special education graduates. The authors also recommended that schools attend more to the home-living, problem-solving, and academic skills development of students.

Data indicated that driver's education was an important variable in post school job success. The authors stressed that all special education students receive mandatory driver's education. Finally, the suggestion that schools expand their placement and job-locating services was made.

In as early as 1975, Fulton stated that no simple formula for predicting the job success of persons with mild and moderate MR is available. As a result, he conducted a study at the area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (VRC) to determine factors describing successful and non-successful clients classified with mild to moderate MR. Fifty-five subjects with an IQ of 80 or below on the WAIS or Quick Test were studied, and all participants had been placed in competitive jobs. Success was defined as lasting at least 6 months on the job, and nonsuccess was losing the job within the first 6 months.

A wide range of variables was explored in this study: (a) I.Q was taken into

consideration, (b) math and reading grade levels, (c) number of days of program service, (d) number of days between program termination and placement on competitive employment, (e) presence of previous work history, (f) sex, (g) whether employer had previously hired a VRC client, and (h) presence of secondary emotional disability. Only one variable, the presence of a secondary emotional disability, revealed any statistical significance between groups. None of the successful clients with mild MR had one, one third of the unsuccessful clients possessed such a disability. Results in the data of non significance were items such as the fact that men participants who lived with the family, and clients with higher beginning wages did better than their counterparts.

Still concerned with graduates with mild and/or moderate disabilities, a study by Cloninger was attempted in 1976. He sent out 204 original and 146 follow-up letters to graduates of an Omaha, Nebraska, work-study program. Only 16 replies were received and the project was abandoned. This demonstrates how difficult it can be to carry out research. The authors concluded that work-study personnel should carry out follow-up studies because they know the subjects.

On a similar vein, Tomblin (1996) pursued an informal study in the southern most part of Texas. In this study, she too, sent out 189 follow-up letters and surveys for individuals over the age of 18 to complete about their job status, work programs, and high school services received. This study was attempting to solicit information from the local Social Security Administration in Angleton, Texas and again from the Texas Rehabilitation Centers in Houston. On the whole, there were no administrators at these offices who were willing to participate in this study. Without help from

government agencies that work with individuals with mild and moderate disabilities, it will be extremely difficult to carry out research, thus making conclusive evidence obsolete.

The Oregon State Department (1977) attempted a statewide follow-up of 1976 high school graduates. They received only 26 respondents with mild and moderate disabilities and therefore did not present data cross-tabulations. It was noted that 58% of the respondents were men and 42% were women, but no employment data were reported. Herein is just one other example of how difficult it is to track and follow up on people who have mild and moderate disabilities once they have left the public schools.

Follow-up data were collected during a 15-year class reunion of work-study students from Kansas City, (Coonley, Klopfenstein, Sitlinger, Wild, & Wright, 1980). All students who had graduated between the years of 1970 and 1980 were invited, via a letter, to attend the reunion. The sample consisted of 100 students; however, the authors neglected to supply information concerning who the invited population was. Those who did respond possessed an IQ range between 50 and 78.

The results of the study revealed a surprising 98% employment rate, with only 9% in sheltered work. Perhaps the success rate could be confounded by the fact that those interviewed self-selected to attend a reunion. The less successful graduates may have chosen not to reveal their failures. However, with no idea of the specific population, interpretation is difficult.

Of those with mild MR, sixty-four percent of subjects owned their own automobiles, and 12% owned their own homes. A total of 36% were married with an

11% divorce rate with 3% being remarried. Three marriages involved two work-study graduates, while the remaining marriages were with normal class partners. There were only 35 children produced by 36 couples. Five of the children attended special classes. Eight of the unmarried subjects lived independently, leaving 56% overall still living with their parents.

Seventy-five percent of the employed were very stable in their employment. The majority of jobs were in food service, followed by homemaking and assembly work. The average annual wage was between $7,000 and $8,000. The results of this study were generally positive, but the skewed nature of the sample selection leaves them open to question. The employment rate was quite high when compared to other follow-up studies.

A control group design was used to evaluate the outcome of a model of vocational training services for students with mild disabilities in Nebraska (Shalock, Wozen, Feis, Werbel, & Peterson, 1984). Ten graduates of the one-year centralized program were matched and compared to the graduates who did not receive those services. No significant group differences were found on outcome measures of employment and living arrangements 2 years following graduation. These findings prompted the authors to move to a decentralized model of services where local school districts and resource teachers learned to implement and deliver vocational services. The reasons behind the reestablishment of varying models of services indicated a need for more control at a local level for districts. One hundred and eight students were then involved in this program and followed longitudinally over a 5-year period. These students were mainly men (82 men compared to 26 women) and had graduated

between 1979 and 1983.

Although the report stated that the research was longitudinal, only isolated measures were reported. Data indicated that 61% of the graduates were employed, 25% were unemployed, 6% were in an MR facility, and 4% were in prison or in a mental health facility. The report indicated that 61% were in supervised living arrangements which, in this case, would mean at home or in a group home. Seventeen percent of subjects were in semi-independent living and 22% were independent. The primary source of income was parents or relatives for 31% of the sample, but 62% reported they were self-supporting. A total of 18 predictor variables, such as gender, IQ, school, and community characteristics were correlated with the outcome variables. The major client characteristics that were predictive of outcomes included: (a) verified disability (LD students did significantly better); (b) gender (men did better); (c) verbal and performance IQ; (d) family involvement; and (e) school absenteeism (negatively correlated). Several school characteristics were positively correlated with outcomes. They consisted of the semesters in vocational programs and the total years of teaching by the resource teacher. The community characteristics that were positively correlated were per capita income, the number of businesses, and the labor force. Participants were 65 students who were classified as mildly disabled. Up until this point, very little empirical data had been analyzed and made available concerning the adult adjustment of LD persons. This research indicated that they have a greater likelihood of economic and independent living success than those individuals with moderate to severe disabilities.

A statewide study of graduates of vocational programs in California was

conducted by Kim and Wright (1984) and included 138 students with mild to moderate disabilities based on the 1,900 who were surveyed. However, only 56 (40%) of the total population of students with disabilities responded. The students were surveyed for one year and again 3 years later when they were out of high school. Authors concluded that one year may be premature in a follow-up study. The general employment rate (nondisabled included) was 17% the first year and 13% the third year after high school. The kinds of disabilities involved in this study were never reported. However since all those included had to have been enrolled in regular vocational education, it can be assumed that they were classified in the mildly disabled range.

The results at 3-years post-graduation revealed that 25% of the graduates who were disabled were in postsecondary training, with 8.9% in a university or college; 12.5% attending junior or community college; and 3.6% attending technical, trade, or business school. Only 42% had received no postsecondary training.

A total of 39% were listed as employed and 37.5% were listed as not in the labor force. Although that is an unclear designation, it often refers to persons who are homemakers, students, or on disability insurance. The unemployment rate was 17.9%, and 5% were in the military. The employment rate for those who were disabled was significantly lower than for any other of the 9 groups. Twenty percent of the persons with disabilities had never worked; this was also significantly higher than for the other groups of students. Additionally, the median hourly wage was lower for employees with mild to moderate disabilities. While only 39% were employed in this study, It is worthy of note that nearly 60% of the individuals with disabilities had

received some kind of postsecondary training.

Another follow-up study of persons who had been placed in competitive employment and given agency support to maintain employment was conducted in the early 1980's (Wehman, Hill, Hill, Brooke, Pendleton, & Britt, 1985). Up to this point, there were still few provisions in the legislature that mandated transition practices be conducted in the schools. A total of 167 clients were placed between 1978 and 1984. The subjects had a mean IQ of 49, with 41% being considered by today's standards as moderately disabled. Excellent data is provided concerning the financial support of clients (86% on SSI), living situations (71% with parents), mobility (10% could ride buses), and program type (42% were in sheltered work, 21% in day activity, 19% no placements and 18% in public schools). It can be ascertained from the report that 19 months was the average time employed, for clients. Placements were usually made at entry-level positions in custodial work, cleaning hotels, restaurants, and hospitals. At the time of the study, 72 (43%) of the individuals were still employed.

The major emphasis of the study was to demonstrate that this population can be competitively employed and that their employment is cost-effective. The mean number of staff hours was 195 for each client from initial placement, through training and follow-up. Although the point that persons with mild and moderate MR can be competitively employed is well stated, there is little follow-up information proceeding the study.

A statewide study conducted in Colorado (Mitaugh, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985) targeted students graduating in 1978 and 1979. Initially, attempts were made

to obtain equal representation throughout the state. This was abandoned due to difficulty locating students. The final sample included all students who could be located and interviewed from about one half of the possible administrative units, an N of 234. The sample consisted of 37% MR, 32% LD, 12% BD, and 19% PI. Men outnumbered women nearly 2 to 1. The mean age of respondents was 22.5 years.

Results indicated that close to ten percent were working and contributing to their own support while 32% were working full-time. Many subjects were earning marginal incomes. Forty-three percent reported they earned less than $3 an hour and 13% reported earning less than $4 hourly.

The majority of respondents (64%) were still living with their parents, 6% had their own homes, and 8% were in their own apartments. Twenty percent of the sample was married. A total of 42% reported that they were socially inactive.

A large number (63%) of subjects indicated that they had not used vocational rehabilitation services. Most of the sample responded that they had found jobs on their own (29%), special education teachers had procured 16% of the jobs, and 13% were obtained through friends. Once on the job, respondents reported few problems with working, two thirds were happy with their jobs.

The authors concluded that special education graduates made generally positive adjustments to their communities. This was in spite of data indicating that most of the students are living with their parents on marginal earnings.

Another follow-up study was carried out on a statewide basis in Vermont (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). All special education students graduating or leaving from nine school districts between 1979 and 1983 were identified. In a randomly

stratified sampling procedure, 462 subjects were selected and 301 of these were interviewed. Resource room male students far outweighed other subjects in the sample. Of the interviewed sample, 55% were in paid jobs. When students, homemakers, and people on disability insurance were excluded, 65% of the potential job seekers were employed. It is noteworthy that virtually all (99%) were in non-subsidized work. However, only 67% were working full-time. A large percentage (84%) of participants found their jobs through the self-family-friend network.

Gender proved to be a significant employment variable. Regardless of marriage status, 66% of men subjects were employed as compared to 33% of women subjects. Manner of leaving school was also a significant factor. Of the graduates, 60% were employed. Contrast this with 51% employment for those who left school prior to 18 without a diploma. This relationship, between graduation and employment, held across gender for rural and metropolitan locations, but not for urban subjects. It did not hold true across level of functioning. One speculation for this difference is the close proximity of neighbors and friends within rural and metropolitan areas. The resource room students were more likely to be employed if they had graduated. This variable did not affect employment for special class students who were obviously more disabled.

A positive relationship between vocational education in high school and employment was established. Participants who had received vocational education were 61% employed, compared to 45% employment for those without vocational education. This finding was significant only for rural students, with a marginal relationship for metropolitan and no significance for urban subjects.

Work experience during high school increased the likelihood of future employment. The students who held no high school summer jobs were found to be 37% employed. Employment rates for students with subsidized summer jobs were 46% versus 69% for those who held non-subsidized jobs. Students who held a job outside of school, during school, demonstrated a 11% rate of employment compared to a decreased employment rate for students with no such job experience. Higher wages were also reported for students with summer work experiences, however the relationship was weak.

Students were most frequently employed in service occupations. Youth from rural areas showed a higher percentage of jobs in agriculture. Many of these rural students worked on family-owned businesses, farms, maple-sugar production, or logging. Much information emerged concerning the employment status of persons with mild disabilities in Vermont. Unfortunately, other critical areas of adult adjustment were left unexplored in this study. For example, federal mandated regulations about transition services being provided for students who were on an IEP were not shown to be a factor in this study. Also missing was data that might indicate whether the student was present at the IEP meeting. Although it was not a requirement at this time, some schools may have been practicing this technique anyway. This study did not address student participation in planning.

Hasazi and colleagues (Hasazi, Gordon, Roe, Hull, Fink, & Salembieu, 1986) published a second Vermont follow-up study. This reported on the employment and residential status of 243 youth with mild to moderate mental retardation that had exited school between 1981 and 1983. Information was gained via school records

and telephone interviews. A large majority of the participants (89.3%) were classified under the category of mild mental retardation, while 10% of the students were considered moderately disabled. There were no severely disabled students. As is typical, 60.4% were men and 39.6% were women.

The sample reflected a 46.4% employment rate. When eliminating homemakers, students, and those on a disability insurance, 59% could be considered employed. The jobs were reported to be 93% non-subsidized, but only 46% were full-time. The employed found jobs mainly with the help of family and friends (28%) or by themselves (31.5%). The remaining 19% found jobs through agencies, with 20% finding jobs in an unspecified manner.

Once again, gender was a significant factor in employment. Fifty-six percent of men versus 23% of women were working, and marriage was not a differentiating variable. The percentage of employment did not vary across locations. Degree of disability was definitely related to employment--only 14% of students with moderate disabilities were working compared with 47% of those with mild disabilities.

The students classified as mildly MR who had participated in work-experience were not more likely to be working. However, those who participated in part-time jobs and summer jobs outside of school were much more likely to be working and receiving higher wages. Graduation versus leaving school, was not related to employment. It also appeared that students from the four districts that had interagency agreements between schools and vocational rehabilitation had better student employment rates. Considering the new school-to-work legislation of the 1990's, this would be a plus for a school to be already conducting these types of

collaborative events with outside agencies and companies. Overall, residential living figures indicated that subjects were mainly living with their parents (82.3%). Thirteen percent were living in a facility of some type, leaving 10.5% living independently.

Also included in the earlier studies were findings that the dropout problem could not be linked to either rural or urban settings. While there are few studies being conducted on the follow-up status of graduates from high school special education programs, there are even less studies conducted that answer questions about rural graduates. The mid-eighties brought about considerable attention to the problems and concerns beginning to surface with students with mild and moderate disabilities demanding rights and fair treatment in the job world. In addition, while studies in the 60's and 70's were conducted to identify outcomes of youths with mild and moderate disabilities, research was still lacking as to exactly what created success for these students.

A follow-up study of students with mild disabilities in rural settings was conducted in Florida (Fardig, Schawartz, Henzel, & Westling, 1985). No data were given concerning the sampling method, but 113 subjects participated in the study. Black students were grossly over represented (64%) as compared to 49% white. There were 73 men and 40 women. A majority of the subjects were classified with mild mental retardation (72.6%). The mean number of years in school was 11.4.

At the time of the study, 44% of the students were full-time employed, 8 (7%) were part-time, 16 (14%) were students, 13 (11%) were homemakers, 4 (3 %) were in the armed forces, 3 (2 %) were incarcerated, and 19 (16%) were unemployed.

Unfortunately, only vague mention was given to wages and kind of work. No data were presented concerning social, mobility, recreation, or living arrangements of the subjects. No real relationship could be established between the vocational programming offered the subjects and their vocational outcomes. The programs they attended were poorly described; the data presented were limited to employment. There is not enough information to accurately assess what population the sample represented. Little can be concluded from this study.

Another study being conducted in the 1980's was from Humes and Brammer (1985). By the mid-eighties, instructional programs for students with learning disabilities in most schools had matured somewhat. School officials felt that it was now time for school counselors and special educators to look at successes and failures of programmatic efforts based on post-school disposition of graduates.

A learning disability program was initiated in a high school in southwestern Virginia on January, 1978. Thirty-three students had been served who were to graduate between 1978 and 1983. Twenty-eight were male and 5 were female. However, only 29 were formally diagnosed and placed as LD students. Four students of the total were placed in the fledgling program who had general learning problems. The diagnosis at that time suggested that three were emotionally disturbed and in need of special education, while one was totally mainstreamed into regular education classes. The survey was conducted by telephone and the respondent was either the former student or parent. The principal investigator was a school counselor. Respondents were asked if they were working or going to school. The results were that 18 were gainfully employed. The author did not reveal whether the student was

full-time or part-time employed. The study continued with descriptive findings that revealed two students were in the military, two students were currently unemployed, and one student was in technical school. Within the sample of graduates, only one student was attending community college and one student was in a sheltered workshop.

Those who were employed went into either unskilled or semiskilled lines of work with manual labor occupations. However, the outcomes were positive along several dimensions, including: (a) the overwhelming number of students enrolled in the program did graduate, namely 24 of 29; (b) an overwhelming number of students (24 of 26) were either working or being trained; and (c) while in high school, 11 out of 29 of the students were receiving some form of vocational-technical training.

On the constructive side, a surprising number were either employed or located in post-secondary educational environments. However, these LD graduates appear to be over represented in the unskilled and semiskilled occupations. Thus, while this study did pose positive results for some of the respondents, researchers conclude that continued efforts must be made for gains in employment. A positive aspect of this particular study is that the author makes mention of the limitations to the study, i.e. geographical location, size of sample, and generalization difficulties. Due to the limited size of the sample, conclusions are taken on a cautionary measure from this study.

Another follow-up study evaluating graduating seniors out of high school for several years was conducted by Haring (1990). Data were taken from a large southwestern metropolitan area. The purpose of the study was to determine the

vocational and community adjustment of students who had graduated from self-contained programs. The study focused on graduates from 1983 to 1985. All the young adults with disabilities in the sample were former special education students who had attended a minimum of 3 years of high school in a self-contained (5 to 6 hours a day in special programs) level of service. All had graduated from integrated schools between 1983 and 1985. Utilizing a computer-generated program, a sample of students who had graduated from 12 high schools in a large metropolitan area in the Southwest was selected. The city from which the sample was drawn covered 95 square miles and had approximately 350,000 residents. Of the residents, about 35% were of Hispanic heritage (Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1986). Initially, 60% of the special education students who had been placed in self-contained classes were selected randomly. Of those, 208 (55% of total graduates) met criteria for the study. This represented 62% randomly selected subjects who met criteria.

Their average age was 21and 64% were male. All subjects had received a high school diploma, documenting that they were high school graduates and signifying the completion of a specified number of credits. The classes many of these graduates attended did not include students who had no disabilities and did not meet the level of academic rigor required in general education courses.

The persons surveyed were (a) learning disabled (n = 64 or 49%); (b) mild to moderately mentally retarded (MMR) (n = 29 or 22%): (c) mildly mentally retarded (Mild MR) (n=20 or 15%); (d) severely and profoundly disabled (n 9 or 7%); and (e) multiply handicapped (MH) (n = 9 or 7%). Persons with MMR and severe disabilities were over represented in the sample. These individuals were more likely

to be served in a community program. Therefore, they could be located regardless of the residential stability of their families. Of those interviewed, 30% were Spanish speaking and several were Native American. They were interviewed in their native language. Up to this point, no other study in an extensive review of the literature has given any distinguishing features to culture such as Native Americans.

An interview instrument was developed based on recent follow-up studies conducted by other researchers (Hasazi et al., 1985; Mithaug et at. 1985; Wehman et at. 1985). The interview instrument was designed to assess a large number of variables including school experience, work record, postsecondary training, residential status, social and recreational activities, social and recreational satisfaction, and parental perceptions.

The study noted that only 3% of the female sample and 5% of the entire sample were married. A total of 6 persons were married. Of these, 4 had one child each. Four unmarried young adults with disabilities, 3 of who were women, also had one child each. Employment status was reported for participants. Regarding gender as a variable, 48% of the female sample were employed or in employment related placements (this included sheltered work and day activity centers) as compared to 75% of male graduates. Marriage did not appear to be a factor in female underemployment. In some previously reviewed studies, marriage, or homemaking constituted employment. A total of 64% of the entire sample (N= 129) were either working or in a supervised employment-related setting. Of the 122 in the sample who could be categorized by exceptionality, 42% were in sheltered workshops or day activity centers. Ten percent of persons with mild MR and 7% of those with MMR

were employed competitively. The study indicated that 59% of subjects with LD were employed competitively.

Differences between female and male earnings were noted. Women made an average of $2 weekly in day activity settings and $14 in sheltered work; those competitively employed averaged $85 a week. Men engaged in day activity centers earned an average of $3 a week and $4 weekly in sheltered work. The average weekly wages males received in competitive employment was $156. The overall average weekly salary for young women with disabilities was $34 compared to $65 for men. The average number of hours worked per week was 27.5 per week. Most participants did not work full time.

Job stability is difficult to assess for persons who have been out of school for so short a period of time. Eight (6%) of those interviewed reported that they had been fired from a job. Numerous reasons were reported for leaving jobs. The most commonly stated reasons were: (a) trouble getting to work, (b) problems getting along with supervisors and coworkers, and (c) inability to perform adequately in the work setting. A total of 87% of those employed or in employment-related placements reported they were happy with their jobs.

The data indicated fairly stable work records, with 32% holding the same placement for a year or more. Twenty-three percent had been working in the same site for 6 months to 1 year, and 25% had held the job or placement for less than 6 months. The average number of jobs held since high school was one.

The data also indicated that subjects had made limited advancement in employment. The number of reported raises were few: (a) 89% said they had never

received a raise, (b) 8% had received one raise, (c) 2% had received two raises, and (d) only 1% reported they had received three raises. More graduates (48%) obtained jobs using the family-friend-self network than through any other means. A number (25%) received jobs or placements with the assistance of public school staff. An equal number (25%) used service agencies (mainly the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) to obtain post school placements. Only 2% reported any other methods of job finding.

As with many of the studies reviewed (Harris, 1998; NLTS, 1990), the length of time subjects had been out of school appeared to increase the likelihood that they were employed or in an employment-related placement (i.e., working competitively or in a sheltered or day activity setting). A total of 41 subjects who had graduated in 1983 were interviewed; 75% were placed. The number of graduates contacted who left school in 1984 was 44; 68% were employed or in employment-related placements. Of the 44 participants who were 1985 graduates. 54% were reportedly holding a job or attending a subsidized workshop or day activity placement. Few participants (11 or 8%) were receiving job-provided medical insurance. Another 22 (17%) were receiving private, family--provided medical insurance. Forty-three percent of those interviewed were on Medicaid, while 31 % had no medical coverage. Relatively few participants (3) had received welfare. Several participants who were parents received food stamps (6 or 4%) or Aid for Dependent Children (3 or 2%). A small number of persons (3) interviewed were receiving some type of ancillary service such as speech, occupational or physical therapy, or counseling. The fact that such services were not available for or could not be afforded by most subjects was

noted frequently.

Majorities (70%) of the interviewed young adults with disabilities were still living with a parent, guardian, or relative. Only 12% were living independently, with a spouse, or with a roommate. Group facilities, exclusively run by the Association for Retarded Citizens, housed 15% of the sample. Small percentages (3%) of graduates were in state institutions. Parents, guardians, or relatives of the subjects were asked where they would prefer their offspring to live. It was evident that some parents of the students with moderate mental retardation would have preferred they live in residential homes.

The majority of subjects were relatively mobile. The data show that 36% of the 122 categorized respondents had driver's licenses and access to a car, 25% rode the city bus, 13% were transported in sheltered agency vehicles, and 14% relied on relatives or friends as their major mode of transportation. Nine people in the LD, mild MR, and MMR areas of exceptionality relied primarily on walking or bike riding for transportation.

A majority (86%) of those subjects interviewed reported that they had never experienced an encounter with the law. Persons that reported legal difficulties described relatively minor or isolated incidents. The most common problems reported were driving while intoxicated and shoplifting arrests. One respondent with MR and 1 with BD reported legal trouble.

As far as self-determination skills were surveyed, only 21 or 16% of the entire sample were registered to vote. Of these persons, 6 reported that they had never voted, and 2 reported that their parents would not allow them to vote.

The scenario for adults with disabilities described in this community is not optimistic. The level of subsidized employment was high, and once placed, the respondents remained in this type of employment with no upward movement. Few adult vocational or postsecondary training services were available in this community. In addition, based on the study, there were no mentions of transition services while in high schools to assist the students. The young adults surveyed received low wages and experienced little vocational advancement. The author states that coordinated transitional services between the schools and community programs are needed in this community.

As is evident in all studies, this study is not without limitations. First, there was no control group of non-disabled young adults for comparative purposes. Ideally, a random sampling of non-disabled persons graduating the same time from the same school district would have been conducted. Interviews could then have been conducted with subjects matched for socioeconomic standing, age, ethnic origin, and sex. Additionally, a comparison group of randomly assigned and well-matched subjects with disabilities who had received little or no special education would have added interest to the results. However, the denial of special services for research purposes is unethical and therefore not possible. Second, the size of the sample was a major limitation. A larger sample might have assured better representation of the population. Third, the students who were more severely handicapped proved easier to contact. This could have led to a biased sample. Clearly, when only those available and consenting are interviewed, it is difficult to guarantee exact representation of the total population. Fourth, the sample was taken from a limited geographic area.

Therefore, generalization beyond this community is not recommended. The fifth limitation concerns design problems. Ideally, a closer look at the lives of graduates would improve the data. Although in most cases several interviews were conducted concerning each individual, a more ethnographic approach would supply a broader picture. Such an approach would include numerous long-term observations of the subjects in all the life domains assessed and more in-depth interviewing. Additionally, a longitudinal design would be better suited to follow-up research, particularly when the data demonstrate improvement trends. This study would provide an excellent baseline for continued follow-up research.

A team of researchers, deBettencourt, Zigmond, and Thornton (1989) studied outcomes for students with mild and moderate disabilities in 1989. This study evaluated rural students with mild disabilities, learning disabilities primarily, to identify consequences of dropping out of school. Authors also wanted to identify whether the rates of dropouts in rural schools were different than those in more urban settings. It would be interesting to note whether dropping out of school would affect student's self-determining skills and also whether earlier participation in a transition program would have helped keep them in school. This study included two research samples (learning disabled and control), that were drawn from a population of ninth graders.

Of the 82 eligible subjects in the LD (learning disabled) sample, 44 (53.7%) were located and participated in the study, whereas 67% of the NLD sample were located and participated. Many of the participants were reported as difficult to locate. At the time of this follow-up, it had been almost 6 years since these students had been

in ninth grade. Many subjects had never had a telephone, or their telephone number was no longer in service. Many of the rural addresses were not in the school records. Many of the rural addresses did not correspond with an actual street listing which made it impossible to conduct a home visit.

The study was conducted in a semi-rural school district where the primary employment opportunity was farming. Between the two high schools in the Virginia school district, the students classified as LD were served within a resource room model that emphasized tutorial and /or remedial instruction. Each student received approximately 1 to 2 hours of resource help per day.

Results indicate that the LD and NLD samples were not significantly different in racial distribution. There were more males in the LD group than in the NLD group. Descriptive information on the LD group was available from the special education records maintained by the school district. Permission was granted by 38 of the 44 subjects to review their records. The LD students were identified as having a mean IQ of 98.5 which was consistent with the IQ ranges reported in national surveys of LD populations. For purposes of this study, students were considered dropouts if their permanent school records indicated that they had not been issued a high school diploma. Students who moved from the district or were incarcerated during secondary school were not classified as dropouts, but were purged from the sample. The dropout rate was the number of students who failed to earn a diploma within 6 years after ninth grade out of the total number of eligible students in the ninth-grade samples.

To maximize contact, several location and contact methods were employed. The researchers obtained most recent addresses and telephone numbers. Each student was telephoned to schedule a face-to-face interview. Letters were mailed to subjects who had current address information. Telephone contacts were made with either the participant himself or herself or parents of the students. The interview guide developed for the previous Zigmond and Thornton (1985) study was used to facilitate comparison of the results on the rural and urban samples.

A major intent for this study was to find similarities and/or differences between rural graduates or urban special education graduates, thus being able to give outcomes of students dropping out of high school in rural areas. This study indicated findings similar to those of the previously conducted researchers (Hasazi, et.al. 1985) in that the dropout rate among the students with LD was nearly three times the rate of their nondisabled peers.

However, the data from the interview methodology reveals a somewhat biased view in that because some types of subjects are more difficult to find than others, the resulting data may not provide a true picture of the phenomenon under study. Participants who are difficult to find include those who have moved away from the area, those who are incarcerated, or those working outside of the local area. In this study, dropouts proved very difficult to locate and interview, and they were underrepresented in the interview data set.

As far as employment is concerned, the dropouts whom were found did not seem to be paying a penalty for not having completed school. However, again, because of biased data, no true conclusion can be found within the data set.

Another finding of the study was that there appeared to be no significant differences in the dropout rates among the students with LD whether they are in rural school districts or urban settings. In many studies, rural population includes any population under a set amount, usually less than 5,000 individuals. The only differences found among the rural and urban students with LD were that the urban LD students had lower achievement scores than those in rural areas, the rural population was comprised of more white students than the urban population, and the rural schools had more female students. The rural setting and economic status of this community also may have related significantly to the employment picture. According to reports, the town had been reporting a very low employment rate overall than the larger, urban setting. This suggests that there may have been less competition for the lesser skilled jobs high school dropouts may seek. In addition, many students with mild disabilities employed in this study were working in construction and building-related jobs as compared to the predominately service-related jobs of the urban LD youth (25%). Because the early 1980's were a time of many construction jobs, these types of jobs were available to non-graduates, whether LD or nondisabled (deBettencourt et. al, 1989). This is an indication that rural schools differ from more urban ones in that they have a distinct educational environment and serve a unique subgroup of students.

With the concerns continuing, SRI: Center for Education and Human Services conducted the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS). The NLTS was conducted from 1987 through 1993 by SRI International under contract number 300-87-0054 with the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of

Education. The NLTS describes the experiences and outcomes of youth with disabilities nationally during secondary school and early adulthood. The NLTS is the first nationally representative database on students with disabilities. All sample members were special education students between the ages of 15 and 21 in the 1985-86 school year. It gives the best picture available of the experiences of young people with disabilities while they were in secondary school and in the first years afterward.

Mandated by the U.S. Congress in 1983, the NLTS includes more than 8,000 youth with disabilities from 300 school districts across the nation. All students were in secondary school and in special education in 1985. Data were collected about them in 1987 and 1990. Telephone interviews were conducted with parents (and the youth themselves if they were able to respond), surveys of teachers and principals who served them, and analyses of students' school records all have contributed to a comprehensive look at many aspects of the lives of young people with disabilities. A screening process was conducted with each telephone recipient who was asked to participate in the study. Voluntary participation was assured.

The NLTS has addressed the following topics concerning youth with disabilities: (a) the characteristics of students, including their disability categories and functional abilities, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic characteristics; (b) school programs, including enrollment in academic and vocational courses, the extent to which students had regular education placements, and the kinds of services and supports provided by schools; (c) school performance, including absenteeism, grades, behavioral assessments, and school completion.

According to the NLTS survey, students with disabilities were more likely

than students in the general population to experience poverty and related factors. The study revealed that about 4 in 10 students in the general population came from households with 1986 incomes of less than $25,000, compared with 68% of secondary school students with disabilities. Factors associated with poverty may contribute to the higher incidence of disability among poor children. These factors may be neglected prenatal care for mothers, poor nutrition, negative environmental influences, increased family stresses and dysfunction, and more frequent illness and injury.

Among other findings from the NLTS, final reports indicate that virtually all students with disabilities had vocational instruction at some point in high school, with more students taking vocational education at each successive grade level. For almost all students with mild and moderate disabilities who took vocational education, at least some of the training was occupationally oriented-training for a specific kind of job. However, fewer vocational students took a concentration of training, which was at least 2 years of one particular training (job area). Also reported were rates of absenteeism for all students with mild and moderate disabilities. Students with disabilities in regular schools missed an average of almost 3 weeks of school each year, with the highest absentee category being other health-impaired students. The study also indicated that almost two-thirds of students with mild and moderate disabilities who stayed in school for 4 years failed at least one course in their high school careers. This report also indicates that 38% of students with disabilities who left school did so by dropping out.

Employment trends are revealed by the NLTS about youth with mild and moderate disabilities. Accordingly, when youths with disabilities had been out of high school between three and five years, 57% were working competitively, and the majority were doing so on a full-time basis (43%). Just over one-third of youths were not working (36%); many (17%) were not looking for work. These rates of participation in the work place lagged behind those of their peers without disabilities. More than two-thirds of youths (69%) in the general population were employed when they had been out of secondary school three to five years ($p < 0.001$).

Further, the study indicates that all students with disabilities did not experience employment successes. Only youths with learning or speech impairments began to approach the employment rates of nondisabled youths as a whole. These were the categories of youths most likely to have taken a concentration of vocational education in high school. Almost two-thirds of graduates (65%) were employed competitively three to five years after high school compared with only 47% of dropouts. Three to five years after high school, employment also was significantly more common for young men with disabilities than for young women (64% versus 40%; $p < 0.001$) and for white youths than for African-American or Hispanic youths (61% versus 47% and 50%, respectively; $p < 0.05$). It is interesting to note that while this study was supposed to have been a random sample of the national population, there was no mention of other cultures or nationalities within the process of defining who works most and who does not. Asian youths and Native American youths were not distinguished among youth statistics. Reasons for omission of these cultures are unknown; thus conclusions for all students cannot be drawn with accuracy.

Labor force participation did not necessarily translate into financial independence for youths with mild and moderate disabilities. The median hourly wage for working youths with disabilities was $5.72 three to five years after high school (1990) and only 40% of working youths with disabilities were earning more than $6.00 per hour. Wage levels were similar for most categories of youths except those with mental retardation or orthopedic impairments, among whom only 13% and 14%, respectively, were earning more than $6.00 per hour when they had been out of school three to five years. Almost twice as many young men as women with mild and moderate disabilities were earning more than $6.00 per hour (44% versus 23%; $p<0.05$), and more than three times as many white working youths as African-American youths were earning that much (46% versus 14%; $p<0.001$). Although graduates were significantly more likely than dropouts to have found jobs, they were not significantly more likely to be earning more than $6.00 per hour (42% versus 38%).

Other factors assessed by the NLTS were living arrangements of students with mild or moderate disabilities. The rate of residential independence among youth with disabilities increased from 11% of youth out of school up to 2 years to 37% of youth out of school 3 to 5 years. However, the rate of independent living is still considerably lower than the rate for youth in the general population, among whom 60% were living independently 3 to 5 years after they left high school. The proportion of youth living in supervised settings (including group homes, institutions for those with disabilities and residential schools that were not colleges) was stable over time, at about 4 % of youth with disabilities. Rates were highest for youth with

multiple impairments, including those who were deaf/blind; about one-third lived in supervised settings.

Socialization skills were also assessed by the NLTS as questions were analyzed regarding seeing friends, belonging to groups, social isolation, voting, and arrests. Basic to the socialization of students with mild or moderate disabilities were figures that coincide with previous studies (Peterson & Smith, 1969; Gozali, 1972) which reveal that social integration after high school posed some difficulties for youths with mild and moderate disabilities. For example, after youth left high school, their frequency of seeing friends declined. However, more than one-third still reported seeing friends 4 or more days per week. This frequency of seeing friends was significantly higher for males than for females with disabilities. Group membership also declined somewhat in the postschool years, so that 3 to 5 years after leaving high school, approximately one in five youth belonged to social or community groups. Moreover, arrest rates increased over time among youth with disabilities, from 19% when they had been out of secondary school up to 2 years to 30% 3 years later. Arrest rates were highest and increased most dramatically for youth with serious emotional disturbances. Two years out of high school, 37% had been arrested. Another factor studied was the living arrangements of the individuals with mild and moderate disabilities. Accordingly, although youth with disabilities were somewhat less likely than those in the general population to be married, young women with disabilities were more likely than other women to be mothers.

While this study gave intensive valuable information regarding many factors pertaining to adult adjustment, it was not without limitations. For instance, the study

did not distinguish between mild and moderate disabilities in a clear manner. In this respect, it was difficult to evaluate the extent of variables creating adult adjustment problems. Another flaw within the format of the study was the fact that self determining factors were not mentioned in regards to participation in IEP meetings by the students themselves, nor was the implementation of transition services at the age of 14 mentioned. In fact, this study reveals that transition goals were not mentioned until the student was in the twelfth grade. It also mentioned that this was a positive factor in influencing the work status of the particular student because of the assumption that youth that young do not know what they want to do when they grow up. The study also mentions parent attitudes and expectations helping to shape the student's achievement. Among youth with disabilities, those whose parents expected them while in high school to further their education after high school did so in greater numbers than youth whose parents did not hold that expectation for them. Similarly, those whose parents expected them to live independently were more likely than other youth to have achieved independence. Since the NLTS was conducted there have been several research groups that have commented on the study and made analyses about the findings (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman & Blackorby, 1992) with all results of the study figures leading to suggestions and recommendations for schools to follow.

The second comprehensive report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students was done in December 1992 (Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman, & Blackorby). The initial NLTS sample was constructed in two stages. A sample of 450 school districts was selected randomly from the population

of approximately 14,000 school districts serving secondary (grade 7 or above) students in special education. These grades had been stratified by region of the country, a measure of district wealth involving the proportion of students in poverty, and student enrollment.

Statewide comprehensive studies were conducted also in 1990 by Sitlington and Frank. One such study investigated the adult adjustment of a statewide random sample of 911 individuals labeled learning disabled who had been graduated from school one year previously. Results are reported in terms of: (a) general characteristics of the sample; (b) characteristics of the employed individuals in terms of rate and location of employment, occupational status, number of hours worked, mean wage, and benefits; and (c) comparisons of employed and unemployed individuals in terms of vocational training, work experiences and post secondary training. The primary purpose of this investigation was to examine factors related to the employment status of persons after exiting high school. Employment outcomes in this study were related to secondary, vocational and training experiences, and to part-time or summer work during high school.

The sample was a merged data set from two separate classes (classes of 1985 and 1986) each surveyed one year after graduation. Each of the 15 Area Education Agencies (AEA's) in the state of Iowa prepared a list of special education students who were graduates from or "aged out" of high school at the end of the target school year. The survey instrument was designed to provide the following types of information: background information, information pertaining to high school

programs, evaluations of school experiences, information about current life circumstances, and information on past and current employment.

Professionals conducted the interviews. In addition, project staff developed an in-depth interviewer's handbook and sample interview forms. Interviewers were instructed to conduct a face-to-face interview with the former student, if possible. If the student could not be contacted, either in person or by telephone, an individual such as a parent, spouse, or sibling was interviewed. Of the interviews analyzed in this study, 47% were face-to-face, 37% were conducted by telephone, and 10% were face-to-face with a parent or guardian.

All survey forms were first returned to the task force member for an initial content and completion check. Next, the completed survey was routed to the Iowa Department of Education for a second check and for removal of any identifying information other than student's I.D. number. A final content check was made at the University of Iowa as well as coding, computer entry and analysis.

The results were that a majority of graduates reported their marital status as single. Sixty-four percent reported living with parents or relatives. At least (90%) of all graduates were involved in some type of leisure activities. Seventy-four percent reported they were currently employed at least part time. An additional (9%) were in positions such as homemaker, student or in job training. Employment rate among males was (81%) and females were employed (66%). Among those employed (97%) were in competitive employment and (1%) sheltered employment. Seventy percent of the employed were working full time (over 37 hours per week), 23% employed

between 21-37 hours per week. The mean wage for total group was $4.39 per hour (about $1.00 above prevailing minimum wage).

The authors describe a successful graduate as: (a) employed (full or part time); (b) buying a home, living independently or living with a friend, (c) paying more than half their living expenses, and (d) involved in more than 3 leisure activities. Among the 911 graduates (4%) were judged to have been successful in making the transition to adult life. Fifty-four percent of graduates interviewed met the following criteria: (a) housewife, student or job training; (b) living independently or with a parent or relative; (c) paying at least a portion of their living expenses; and (d) involved in more than one leisure activity. In terms of overall employment, the present study found that 77% of the graduates were engaged in full or part time work with an additional 9% engaged in being a homemaker, student or job training. Approximately 15% more male than female graduates were employed. The average wage for graduates was $4.39 per hour, with the differential between males and females again surfacing in this variable. The average wage for males was over $1.00 per hour greater than for females.

In order to continue to get a more accurate picture of the outcomes of students with mild and moderate disabilities, Sitlington and Frank (1994) conducted a study that also evaluated rural schools. They decided to conduct this study on a state level rather than on a national level. This particular study was in addition to the Iowa Statewide Follow-up Study, which was a five-year project designed to study a random sample of special education graduates and dropouts (of all disabilities and program models) throughout the state of Iowa. This research was designed to

investigate the effect of high school community size on the adult adjustment of individuals with mild disabilities who had been out of school for three years. The variables addressed within the context of the study included: (a) general adult status; (b) employment variables; and (c) successful adult adjustment. Authors of this study compared the adult adjustment of a statewide sample of 399 graduates and dropouts from high schools in rural areas with the adjustment of 541 counterparts randomly chosen from high schools in urban areas, thus comparing participants from 1985 and also from 1988.

The participants in this study were surveyed at one year, and again in three years after the class had graduated. Each of the 15 local Area Education Agencies (AEA's) in the state prepared a list of special education students (all exceptionalities) who were graduated from, or aged out, of high school at the end of each target year. For each AEA, 50% of the students on each list were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample each target year.

Project staff in conjunction with the 15 AEAs of Iowa had developed the survey instrument used in this study. Professionals such as work experience coordinators, consultants, school psychologists, and teachers from each student's school district or AEA conducted interviews. All survey forms were first returned to the task force member for an initial content and completion check. Data analyses were completed using routines described in SPSS-X User's Guide (1986).

Given this statistical analysis description, it is difficult to evaluate which statistical procedures were utilized to evaluate the data set. Results concerning the status of participants were shown in categorical form consisting of two columns:

(a) employment information (employment status, hours worked, wages, and job benefits), (b) general adult information (living arrangement, amount of expenses paid by the individual; and (c) amount of participation in post-secondary education or training).

In this study, there were two types of data comparisons made. First, same year data were compared for individuals within a disability category by location of high school attended (e.g. rural vs. urban data for individuals with LD year 1). A difference of less than or equal to 15% was considered worth noting, although the choice of using the percentage was arbitrary in nature. Second, year three data were compared to year one data for corresponding groups (e.g. year 3 data for LD individuals who also attended high school in a rural area were compared to year 1 data for those same individuals). The less than or equal to 15% rule also was applied to these comparisons.

This study basically reveals that one year out of school were not much different between rural and urban subjects except for those with behavior disorders, where a significantly higher percentage of rural youth were employed. This is in contrast to Hasazi, et. al, (1985) who found higher employment rates for urban participants. In terms of job status significantly more urban participants with LD were employed in service worker positions and significantly more urban subjects with behavioral disorders were employed in high status occupations. Significantly more rural subjects with mental disabilities were employed in laborer positions. Because Frank and Sitlington make a distinction between behavioral disorders and mental disabilities, it is difficult for valid interpretations to be made about this particular data

set. The reader has no identifiable information, which indicates what is considered a behavior disorder and what is a mental disability.

Three years out of school differences between urban and rural subjects arose again only with individuals with behavioral disorders. Overall, for all participants, there were noticeable major improvements in a majority of adult adjustment areas for individuals from both rural and urban districts. Individuals with LD from urban districts slightly exceeded their rural counterparts in the number of improvement categories. The only pertinent shifts occurred for individuals with LD. These participants showed a lower percentage of employment in the service worker status occupations than did the group of students classified as BD.

Although both rural and urban subjects made significant increases in a number of adult adjustment areas in the period from one to three years out of school, the overall level of successful adjustment is not encouraging. While individuals from rural districts appeared to be slightly better adjusted, there were no significant differences for any one disability group or for the group as a whole. Combining those who met either the high or low composite criteria for adult adjustment, between 21% and 37% of rural participants could be considered well adjusted. Between 15% and 29% of the individuals from urban districts met these criteria.

While studies such as these lead current researchers to get empirical data about work status, employment habits, and living adjustments of individuals with mild and moderate disabilities, there are side effects to such studies that reveal unanswered questions. For example, the longer an individual is out of school, the less confidence the researcher has in attributing success or lack of success to the school

program. Second, the interview process itself and the resulting contact with the individual may have constituted an intervention that would not otherwise have existed. Third, the overall rural nature of Iowa may limit the generalization of the urban data to states with a number of major metropolitan areas.

However, given the limitations and possible difficulties found within this study, there are indications that are pertinent. First, this study has data that has been collected before formal transition planning was systematically in place for the state, thus having many of these individuals receiving no formal transition planning or support services. This study shows that even without formal transition planning, these individuals were able to make a somewhat successful transition from high school and to increase that status the longer they were out of school. Therefore, this study provides a background and baseline for the transition practices currently in place. At this point however, there are still questions left. Questions left unanswered are whether earlier participation in IEP meetings could have enhanced the student's ability to achieve higher levels of success after high school. In addition, one is often left pondering whether or not it would have been beneficial to have transition programs beginning at an earlier age for students with mild and moderate disabilities. It is helpful for today's transition practices to continue with longitudinal as well as follow-up studies that focus on specific periods out of school.

Another study, which has been a major breakthrough for education has been the research of Frank and Sitlington (1996) whereby they examined the outcomes of young adults with behavioral disorders. This is a different study from their prior 1985-88 study previously analyzed. The primary purpose behind this study was to

compare these students before and after IDEA. This is one of the first studies to conduct such a survey and correlate information into analysis.

This particular investigation compared the adult adjustment of high school graduates with mild to moderate disabilities including behavioral disorders from the classes of 1985 and 1993. The class of 1993 was graduated after the passage of IDEA and had the benefit of transition planning efforts emanating from local, state, and federal initiatives. This study was designed to address two questions: (a) were graduates with mild to moderate disabilities from the class of 1993 "better off" than their counterparts from the class of 1985 as young adults out of school for one year? and (b) should we be satisfied with the current status of these individuals?

This study uniquely compared participants drawn from members of the high school class of 1985 and 1993. These individuals were randomly selected from the special education rosters of 9 ALAs, which were participating in the Systems Change Grant on Transition. The original target sample per ALA was 70 participants (60% individuals with mild disabilities and 40% individuals with moderate to severe disabilities). Of the total sample of randomly selected former special education students, 55 were graduates who had been labeled behaviorally disordered while in high school.

The study did a comparison of participants across classes. Non-parametric statistical tests did not reveal significant differences between participants from the two graduating classes relative to gender, full-scale IQ scores, reading grade equivalent scores, or math grade equivalent scores.

Interviews were conducted approximately one year after the graduation of the

participants (summer/fall of 1986) by work experience coordinators, consultants, school psychologists, parents, or teachers from each participant's school district or ALA. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with 48% participants; an additional 21% were completed by telephone. When direct interviews with participants were not possible, parents were interviewed (10% face-to-face and 21% by telephone). A reason for noncompletion of interviews had to be provided as well. The most frequent reason provided was that an individual had moved out of town and could not be located.

The same procedures were used for the class of 1993. During the senior year (Spring/Summer of 1993), ALA data collectors completed an in-school data form for each participant. Approximately one year after graduation (Summer/Fall of 1994), study participants were engaged in a structured interview, during which their responses were recorded on the post-high school interview form by the interviewer. Data analyses were completed using descriptive statistical routines.

Results of this study were interesting to most who interpreted them because it created a clearer picture of how our new programs are actually working. The percentage of participants enrolled in regular vocational education programs during the junior and senior years increased substantially in 2 of the 7 areas: Trade and Industry and Multi-occupations. The only program area in which a decrease was observed involved Business and Office Education. It should be noted that almost half (48%) of the class of 1993 participants were not involved in any regular vocational education programs during their junior or senior year in high school.

Data also were collected regarding participation in specially-designed

vocational training during the junior and senior years in high school. Increases in enrollment for the class of 1993 were observed in 2 of the 4 program areas: Experiential Exploration (18% for the class of 1985, 35% for the class of 1993) and Work Experience (31% for the class of 1985, 53% for the class of 1993). Experiential Exploration programs provided students with an opportunity to explore a number of occupations or jobs while receiving school credit, but typically no pay. Overall, 46% of the class of 1985 did not participate in any specially-designed vocational training during the junior or senior year in high school. Only 10% of the class of 1993 participants were not involved in any such programs during their junior or senior year in high school. Very few participants attended a four-year college after graduation from high school (3% for the class of 1985, 0% for the class of 1993). Sixty eight percent of the class of 1993 participants were employed, a substantial increase over the class of 1985 (54% employed). There were corresponding decreases in the unemployment rate (25% and 32%, respectively) and in the proportion of participants meaningfully engaged (i.e., in a job training program, full-time student, or homemaker) for the class of 1993 (6% and 14%, respectively). A comparison of the number of hours worked per week revealed that only a slight decrease had occurred in full-time employment (60% and 53%, respectively for the classes of 1985 and 1993). Similarly, a small increase was observed in employment of less than 21 hours per week (14% and 20%, respectively, for the classes of 1985 and 1993). The percentage of employed participants working 21-37 hours per week for each class was 27%.

The mean wages earned per hour for employed participants in the classes of 1993 and 1985 were $5.11 and $3.69, respectively. This represented a 38% increase for the class of 1993 over the class of 1985. Full-time workers in the class of 1993 earned more per hour than did part-time workers (a difference of $.56 cents); this was also true for the class of 1985 (a difference of $1.61). While increases between 1986 and 1994 were noted for both full-time and part-time workers, only part-time workers were actually earning more in 1994 compared to 1986 when inflation was taken into account.

As far as living arrangements are concerned, there was a small increase from 1985 to 1993 in the proportion of participants who were living independently (i.e. buying a home, living with a friend or spouse, or living in a college dormitory (25% and 32%, respectively). The proportion of participants living with their family or relatives remained almost the same among the years being observed. Results showed that 58% of the individuals lived with their family or relatives in 1985 while 59% lived with their family in 1993. For both graduating classes, the most frequently mentioned source of financial assistance were the parents. Overall, the percentage of participants who stated they received no financial assistance went down only slightly for the class of 1993.

When asked if the high school programs had been helpful, many of the students' perceptions were somewhat negative. Regarding high school instruction related to functional academics, job-related skill development, and social and daily living skill development, participants from the class of 1993 held more positive perceptions. About one-third of the class of 1985 answered "very helpful" in skill

development, versus about one-half of the 1993 participant answers for the same question.

Overall, 36% more of the class of 1993 participants with mild moderate disabilities were receiving some type of specially-designed vocational training than those with disabilities from the class of 1985. The results are encouraging in view of the findings of the National Assessment of Vocational Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) and NLTS (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner et al., 1993). These studies conclude that students with disabilities who took vocational education were more likely to be employed than those who did not, and that participating in work experience programs increased their chances of finding a job. Unfortunately the small sample size of this study precluded exploration of the relation of vocational education to employment.

Perhaps one of the most exciting results was a 13% increase in participation in postsecondary education and training programs, due largely to the 10% increase in those attending community college programs. This is compared to an 8% increase in participation in postsecondary education and training (with an 8% increase in community college attendance) for all Iowa high school graduates during a similar time period (Iowa Department of Education, 1987; 1993). Individuals who complete such postsecondary programs are better equipped with advanced skills to obtain higher status jobs.

Of all the post-school outcome areas examined in this investigation, the class of 1993 showed the most improvement over the class of 1985 in the areas related to employment. There was a 7% decrease in unemployment, compared to 2% decrease

in unemployment for all Iowa graduates out of school one year (Iowa Department of Education, 1987; 1993). The class of 1993 was better off than the class of 1985 in all but one area (holding a full-time job). In addition, substantial improvements were observed in the percentage of those who were employed and among those who received fringe benefits. An analysis of employment outcome variables by hours worked per week (full vs. part-time) yielded some interesting findings. There were very substantial increases in the percent of full-time employees receiving major fringe benefits. On the other hand, the class of 1993 part-time employees were paid substantially more per hour than those working part time from the class of 1985; those employed full time from the class of 1993 actually reported a decrease in mean hourly wage compared to their class of 1985 counterparts.

A substantial increase was observed in the proportion of part-time workers in higher status occupations and a corresponding substantial decrease in the proportion of part-time workers in service worker occupations. On the other hand, a substantial increase occurred in the proportion of full-time employees who were classified as service workers, and a corresponding substantial decrease occurred in occupations classified as laborer, which could be viewed as a shift between blue collar occupations. Employed participants from the class of 1993 were viewed as much less upwardly mobile than employed participants of the class of 1985, as judged by the lack of wage increases in their first year on the job.

There was no substantial improvement in the proportion of participants living independently. This may be attributed to the higher percentage of young adults attending postsecondary education institutions and to the lack of a major increase in

hourly wage. The results concerning living expenses and sources of financial assistance appear to conflict. Although there was a substantial increase in the proportion that reported paying some of their living expenses, there were substantial increases in all but two sources of financial assistance.

Finally, young adults' perceptions of the usefulness of their school experiences offer reinforcement for the high school educational programs in which they were enrolled. There were substantial increases in all but one area (daily living skills) in the proportion of those who rated their preparation as "Very helpful." Even in the daily living skills area, there was a substantial decrease in those who rated their preparation as "Not at all helpful."

This comparison between the classes of 1985 and 1993 suggests that the class of 1993 was better off in a number of areas related to vocational postsecondary education. Further, improvement in employment cannot be explained simply by the changes in the economy over the period of the study. What educators are doing in our schools and adult service providers appears to be working, but the need to keep asking questions whether we have reached our goals must continue.

A major concern was that 48% of the class of 1993 participants were not enrolled in any type of occupationally specific regular vocational education. This was substantially less than the national enrollment rate of 87% for the class of 1992 reported by Tuma and Bums (1996). This difference is heightened by the fact that graduates with disabilities consistently earned more credits in the vocational curriculum than those with no disabilities (Tuma & Bums, 1996). The National Assessment of Vocational Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) found

that for the class of 1992, the top two vocational areas in terms of enrollment were Business and Office Education (56%), and Trade and Industry (35%). The top three areas of enrollment for class of 1993 participants in this investigation were Home Economics Occupations (23%), Trade and Industry (19%), and Business and Office Education (14%). As mentioned previously, data could not be located on vocational education enrollment for the general population in Iowa.

The information on enrollment among class of 1993 participants in specially designed vocational training programs can be seen as both positive and negative. The fact that all but 10% of the individuals had been enrolled during either their junior or senior year indicates that they had received some type of vocational preparation and experience. On the negative side, it is clear that the majority of individuals with BD who were receiving training were being served in programs provided by special education, as opposed to regular vocational education programs. In addition, even with the high enrollment in specially designed programs, 10% of the students were graduated from high school with no vocational preparation.

The postsecondary education results also issue a challenge to us. Fifty percent of the participants had received no type of postsecondary education or training. This compares to 31% of all Iowa graduates of the class of 1991 (Iowa Department of Education, 1993). Within the class of 1991, 28% were enrolled in community colleges, 39% in four-year colleges, and 2% in apprenticeship or private training programs. It could be argued that our goal should be to increase enrollment in four-year colleges in order to provide access to high status occupations. However, the National Assessment of Vocational Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1994)

found that community college students are more likely to be employed and to use their vocational training on the job than trainees from other types of postsecondary institutions. Perhaps whether enrollment in a community college or four-year program is a preferred goal would depend upon the transition goals identified by the individual and his/her family.

Although we have made progress in a number of the post school outcome areas, we still have work to do in the areas of transition planning and programming for individuals with mild to moderate disabilities including behavioral disorders. The 25% unemployment rate looms large compared to the 2% unemployment rate for all Iowa graduates of the class of 1991 one year out of school. The fact that only half of those employed are employed full time also raises concern, especially in terms of the low percentage of part-time workers receiving fringe benefits and the lower mean hourly wage of part-time workers. The news regarding fringe benefits is encouraging, especially for full-time workers. Still, at least 38% of those employed full time do not receive major fringe benefits (e.g., health insurance).

It is difficult to evaluate the outcomes related to living and financial independence, since we could locate no comparable data for young adults without disabilities. The fact that only 9% reported paying none of their living expenses is hopeful, but this is offset by the report that almost half received financial assistance from their parents and only 33% reported received no financial assistance.

Another study was conducted in 1992 by Karpinski, Neubert, and Graham in which they considered their logistics as a follow-along rather than a follow-up. They stated that while follow-up studies were useful for examining postsecondary

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reported that they received vacation and merchandise discounts at the time of both interviews.

In contrast to the studies conducted on a statewide level or in urban and suburban settings (Edgar, 1987; Hasazi et.al., 1985, 1989; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985), both the graduates and the dropouts in the present study fared well in terms of obtaining employment after exiting the school system. Similar results have been reported in other studies conducted in rural settings (Cobb & Crump, 1984; deBettencourt, et.al., 1989). As a group, the participants not only had a relatively high rate of employment (over 70%), but were also generally employed in full-time jobs earning approximately $2.00 over the minimum wage. Nonetheless, differences were evident between the two groups in terms of percentage of time employed since leaving school and the number of months on the job at the time of the terminal interview. While it can be argued that most youth do not remain employed at the same job for long periods of time, the differences between graduates and dropouts were notable.

At the time of this study, the deBettencourt et al. (1989) study had similar findings, in which participants accessed jobs in processing and structural occupations in addition to service-oriented work. Also consistent with other researchers in the late 1980's and early 1990's were that the employment outcomes for females continued to be less than attractive. At the first interview, females were employed at almost half the rate of males. By the second interview, differences favoring males were also evident in terms of wages.

At no point in this study was the word, self determination even mentioned. This concept had obviously slipped by the study. While the study revealed elements that would be inherently critical to the self determination of the participants in the study, the study did a scant job in covering such demises. For example, females with little or no advancement in work would likely have many developed self determining behaviors. This would be an important aspect to embark on within the framework of this study. Also critical for the study would be to mention whether the participants attended their IEP meeting or whether they decided not to attend. Questions and comments such as these would have made the study more structured and also more enriched with information needed for the new era.

On a nationwide scale, one of the most recent and most comprehensive studies of the decade has been the 1998 National Organization on Disabilities (NOD) also known as the Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities (Harris & Associates, Inc. 1998). This study, a nationwide survey of 1,000 Americans with disabilities age 16 and older, was conducted in April and May of 1998. This study was designed to provide comprehensive and up-to-date measures in a number of areas including: (a) participation in important life activities, e.g. employment, socializing, financial status, and lifestyles of Americans with disabilities and how they have changed over the last twelve years; (b) job discrimination and the presence of barriers; familiarity with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA); (c) special needs of those with disabilities; (d) sense of common identity shared by adults with disabilities; (e) access to health care and satisfaction with the services given; and,

(f) participation in religious services, and the importance of faith in the lives of individuals with disabilities.

This is the third major national survey that Louis Harris and Associates has conducted to study the attitudes, experiences, and levels of participation of Americans with disabilities. Where applicable, comparisons have been made between findings in 1998 and the findings in 1994. Harris and Associates screened more than 25,000 households randomly in the general population in order to generate a sample of 1,000 adults with disabilities aged 16 and over. No more than one adult per household was interviewed.

The study is based on 1,000 telephone interviews with a national sample of non-institutionalized persons with disabilities age 16 and over. The data are weighted by age and sex, based on information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, to compensate for age and sex differences between the composition of the sample (i.e. those who completed the survey) and the population it is intended to represent.

Twenty-five minute interviews were conducted by telephone with eligible respondents. When a person with the disability was unavailable, a proxy who knew most about that person was chosen. About 12% of the interviews were conducted with proxies.

In order to gain a comparison among those with disabilities and those who are nondisabled, a national sample of 905 adults aged 18 and over without disabilities was asked a number of the survey questions. Where comparisons are made between these two groups, the results for persons with disabilities have been restricted to include only responses from those age 18 and over to provide a true comparison.

Interviews were conducted from the Harris telephone research center located in Birmingham, New York. All surveys adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Complete copies of the report can be ordered by phone, fax, or from the National Organization on Disability, 910 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, 20006.

This survey has found that Americans with disabilities continue to lag well behind other Americans in many of the most basic aspects of life, as previous Harris studies found in 1994 and 1986. Large gaps still exist between adults with disabilities and other adults with regard to employment, education, income, frequency of socializing, and other basic measures in ten major "indicator" areas of life. Furthermore, most of these gaps show little evidence of narrowing. In some cases, the gaps have even widened.

Employment continues to be the area with the widest gap between people with disabilities and the rest of the population. Only three in ten working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time, compared to eight in ten adults without disabilities. Working age adults with disabilities are no more likely to be employed today than they were a decade ago, even though almost three out of four who are not working say that they would prefer to be working. This low rate of employment has, in turn, led to an income gap that has not narrowed at all since 1986, with one in three adults with disabilities, compared to just one in eight adults without disabilities, living in very low income households with less than $15,000 in annual income. Also, while adults with disabilities continue to make progress in higher education — they are now

just as likely to have completed at least some college as other adults. Yet, they continue to be behind in getting a basic education, with one in five failing to complete high school, compared to only one in 10 adults without disabilities.

These gaps in employment, income, and education, along with gaps in frequency of socializing, entertainment, and access to transportation and health care can arguably be linked to the gap that exists in life satisfaction. To determine what gaps exist and to note changes over time, specific quantifiable measurements or indicators have been developed for key life activities. A gap is defined as the number of percentage points by which Americans with disabilities lag behind other Americans on a given indicator. Only about one in three Americans with disabilities say that they are very satisfied with life in general compared to fully six out of ten people without disabilities. And while the proportion of those with disabilities are very satisfied has not declined in the past four years, the proportion who feel that disability has prevented them from reaching their full abilities as a person has increased considerably during this same time period.

According to the study, among adults with disabilities of working age (18 to 64), 29% work full or part-time. It is also chronicled that 34% of the adults with disabilities live in households earning less than $15,000 per year. In conjunction, about 33% of adults with disabilities go to a restaurant at least once a week.

Self-determining behaviors such as voting was also observed in this study. According to the survey, 62% of the adults with disabilities were registered to vote in the 1996 presidential election. This is somewhat lower than those nondisabled who were registered to vote (78%).

When it comes to satisfaction with life, only about 33% of adults with disabilities are very satisfied with life in general. This is compared to 61% of their counterparts without disabilities. This gap, currently 28 percentage points has widened over the past four years as people without disabilities have become more optimistic, while those with disabilities have shown no increase in optimism.

There is some evidence that over the past decade these gaps have persisted, adults with disabilities have, as a group, have not enjoyed higher socioeconomic standing. Adults with disabilities are more likely today than in the past to say that their disability is very or somewhat severe. They may also state that they are unable to work because of their disability and that their disability prevents them from "getting around". Additional comments are that they need help from another person in work, school, or housework. Regardless of the cause, if persons with disabilities as a group have become more severely disabled and the trend continues, there is a real possibility that the gaps will not only persist, but further widen in coming years unless more aggressive measures are taken to address them.

Although the gaps in income access, participation, and satisfaction between those and those without disabilities are wide, and in some cases widening, a clear majority of Americans with disabilities believe that life has improved for people with disabilities over the past decade. Two out of three feel that things have gotten much better or somewhat better over the past ten years. The majority feel that access to public facilities, quality of life, public attitudes toward people with disabilities, the media's way of portraying people with disabilities, and access to public transportation have gotten better over the past four years.

International Follow-Up Studies

To demonstrate the depth of the problem, studies conducted on an international level have also met with equal difficulties in regards to their young population with mild/moderate disabilities living successful adult adjustments after high school. A study conducted in Australia (Ward, 1978) demonstrated results similar to research conducted in the United States. A sample of 53 participants who left the Work Preparation Center (a secondary special education program) in 1974-1975 was surveyed. Of these, 46 were available in 1976 but only 40 were available and interviewed in 1977. The clients were all considered mildly MR, with an IQ range from 55 to 80 points. An additional 67.5% had secondary disabilities such as speech problems, epilepsy, hearing, or visual impairments, or psychological problems.

The results indicated that 91% of the subjects were still living with their parents. Seven percent were living in state boarding homes, and two percent were living independently. More than 92% were still single. Forty percent of the sample had full-time employment, with 21% being fully employed in sheltered workshops. Those working demonstrated job stability, but a majority of the jobs were in lower status positions. The biggest problem respondents had staying employed was trouble with speed and accuracy required on the job, with 62.5% of the subjects indicating this difficulty. Other problems included social relationships and relationships with supervisors. Data further indicated that subjects had difficulty solving problems. A large number (52.5%) responded that they sought help from the boss before trying to solve a work problem.

This particular study also looked at factors such as recreation and leisure. A majority of participants spent their leisure time at home. Few participants reported having friends. More than half, 24 reported they had never had a friendship with a member of the opposite sex. This would be considered highly out of the norm for a group of teenagers in which the average age is 19 years.

Similar in findings from the United States population of individuals with mild and moderate disabilities, this international study proclaims that 72.5% had experienced no legal problems, while the remainder experienced persistent problems. The offenses were all minor or traffic-related except for one-armed robbery charge.

The members of this sample demonstrated adequate budgeting, with 87.5% holding their own bank accounts. Many were saving for future purchases. Most were covered by some kind of medical insurance. Ward also reported that Australian studies are not generally so optimistic. They report much lower rates of success for special school graduates, about 20-30% retaining employment. The data from this study gives positive support to the work preparation concept for mildly MR persons.

Another example of international concern is revealed in a study conducted at the National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, Taiwan (Wu-Tien Wu, 1998). Like researchers in the United States, the purposes of this study were to follow up the secondary school graduates of the special classes for the mild and/or moderately disabled in terms of current status and employment conditions. Participants were graduates of 1993-96, comprised of individuals with mild or moderate mental retardation, people with visually impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, and multiple disabilities. They were derived from 126 schools (including

8 special schools) from 21 counties/cities in Taiwan area. Results on 3,277 subjects (93.64% of the total population) were obtained, among them the majority were those with MR (2,124, accounted for 65.8%), and their previous homeroom teachers interviewed them. Participants or their parents were asked to complete a questionnaire during or after the interview.

To initiate the study, written consent was obtained from the participating schools, from which the name lists of graduates of the past three years were provided. A pre-administration of the survey was developed in each region. Interviews were performed by the graduate's previous homeroom teacher. They made a phone call to gain parental consent and make sure that the subject was available and willing to participate in the interview. In the case of unavailability, a written survey by mail was sent instead (which accounted approximately for 1/3 of the total data). Where the subject had difficulty in participating in the survey, parents or guardians took his or her place. Obtained data were analyzed in terms of chi-square and analysis of variance. Analysis was between those students who had participated in vocational training, a work-study program in high school, and between those who had graduated versus those who dropped out.

Based on the questionnaire survey, the major findings were as follows: (a) in general, while the majority of the subjects were under 20 years of age, most of them (1, 339,or 43.4%) were still in school; (b) 983 (or 30.5%) had a full-time job; (c) 609 (or 18.9%) stayed at home; (d) 170 (or 5.3%) were receiving vocational training; (e) the rest (66, or 2.0%) were unanswered. In terms of vocational choice, the major considerations were "personal ability", "job location", and "personal interest". The

major way of obtaining a job was through "family members or relatives" recommendation. However, their jobs were mainly low-skilled or labor-focused with an average salary of approximately $365.00 in US currency, significantly inferior to regular workers. Nevertheless, they showed moderate job satisfaction. For those jobless subjects (excluding those in school and vocational training), the main reasons they were unemployed included "lack of job skills" and "being rejected because of disability". In the conclusive findings, most of the participants interviewed indicated a desire to receive vocational training and/or find a job in the near future.

The author concluded that because the participants were young (mostly under 20 years of age), few of them had a full-time job, many were still in school, and most were in need of and willing to receive vocational training. The author also reported that while the participants appeared genuinely concerned about their status in life and had learned a lot of living skills in school, the social support after their graduation was not sufficient. There was a great need to improve the mobility facilities and the employment conditions. Finally, suggestions were made in terms of career guidance and future studies. It would be sufficient to say that, even at an international level, postsecondary outcomes for youth with mild and moderate disabilities is at best, behind the standards for those who are not disabled. Neither study from Australia or Taiwan indicated levels of self-determination or transition practice implemented in early grades.

Summary

Chapter 2 consists of various and numerous studies indicating postsecondary outcomes for students with mild and moderate disabilities. Each study was detailed

with the intent to draw attention to the statistical data about the participants studied and to make comparisons and inferences among the data. The statistical methods implemented in all of the follow-up studies previously conducted examined and reported their data using percentages and frequencies. This tends to be the most frequently used and the most widely used method to disseminate information regarding students and postsecondary factors of their life. In general, the consensus of these studies indicate that youths with learning disabilities receive lower pay than youths without learning disabilities being hired by companies. As a rollover effect of part-time employment, they do not receive the full company benefits that would otherwise be bestowed upon them such as medical insurance, sick leave, paid vacations, retirement plans, and shareholder options within the company. Salaries for this group of individuals average between $4.00 to $6.00 per hour and women with learning disabilities have a far worse chance of gainful employment than men with learning disabilities. To say the very least, there is little chance for financial security among the students with learning disabilities. Considering the staggeringly similar results of follow-up studies conducted in other countries, it could be surmised at this point that the majority of students with mild and moderate disabilities need additional alternatives in order to succeed in the work world. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that regardless of geographical location, self determining behaviors and quality of living are both considered to be critical components of any follow-up study and should be examined to a closer degree in all areas of life.

In addition, intervention programs that include teaching job-related skills deemed necessary by employers may be essential and necessary in all vocational

programs. The teaching of job social skills as well as academics would be included in all high school vocational programs for students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities. It would seem appropriate that transition services that specifically dealt with this type of intervention would be of importance in the IEP meeting, on the ITP, and as a collaborative effort among school and community leaders.

A major limitation of current follow-up studies is the lack of knowledge about how new legislation has affected the students and their lives after leaving high school. The data available was primarily from studies that were conducted prior to IDEA and new regulations regarding the ITP's. Furthermore, many of the studies examined for this research did not identify the implementation of self determination or the participation in the IEP meeting by the student.

Another major limitation of many of the historical and current follow-up studies is the lack of a longitudinal nature. The data available was gathered fairly soon after subjects left school. The students who have been recently identified and followed should be studied systematically through their adulthood. It is critical that longitudinal follow-up studies are continued. Recent studies on adjustment of adults with disabilities indicate the need to examine not only program content, but research methodology as well. Program content must include new legislative regulations that are mandated on a federal level and trickle down to the district level. Are they working? Do the students benefit from these rules?

Chapter III

Methodology

Despite the fact that other, more sophisticated methods of analysis have been developed within recent years, the descriptive survey still remains the most commonly used research method in education (Harris, 1985; Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988). The purpose of using descriptive survey methodology is to describe and characterize the situation that exists in the target population (Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988). Although, surveys cannot give precise measurement of a phenomenon, nor is survey research an exact science, the survey provides a means of aggregating collected information, and illuminating variations in behavior and attitude. They are also well known for providing a context for informed judgement and decisions (Hoinville & Jowell, 1977).

The survey method was chosen as appropriate for this study because the purpose of this study was to describe and characterize the new IDEA regulations and how this new legislation affects the individual lives of young adults who graduate from high school. Based on previous studies conducted (Frank & Sitlington, 1990; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990), using a descriptive analyses is the most frequently used methodology for examining the postsecondary outcomes of students with and without disabilities.

The framework for the survey was based on models of previously conducted follow up studies which were predicated upon the quality of life principle. The models included the following components: (a) employment, (b) postsecondary training, (c) postsecondary community services, (d) living arrangements, (e)

community access, (f) social recreation domain, (g) self determination factors, (h) law involvement, and (i) self-help group affiliation. The components are well identified in the literature (Frank, Sitlington & Carson, 1995; Halpern, 1993; Haring, Lovett & Smith, 1990; Harris & Associates, 1998; Sitlington 1996; Sitlington & Frank, 1998). However, despite the previous research which have identified these components as critical and necessary in the preparation for life beyond high school, there is little empirical research to delve into the recent effects of the new IDEA regulations and its effect on the outcomes of students.

Participants

All high school graduates from 1995 through 1998 who attended high school in the counties chosen were included in the population. Names of high school graduates were extracted from public lists of names given by local administration offices, libraries, high school principals or local newspapers. Graduates who were not enrolled in special education programs and also graduates who were enrolled in special education programs were eligible to participate in this study. While no formal testing was conducted, the participants were reported as being in the range of mild to moderate retardation, with none being in the severe/profound category. The population for this study consisted of 187 adult volunteers randomly selected who graduated from high schools from seven counties in Central and Southeastern Oklahoma including Cleveland, Garvin, Johnston, McClain, Murray, Oklahoma, and Pottawatomie County. Participating high schools were: Lexington, Little Axe, Noble, Maysville, Pauls Valley, Paoli, Coleman, Milburn, Tishomingo, Blanchard, Purcell, Newcastle, Davis, Sulphur, Bethany, Del City, Putnam City North, Maud, Shawnee

and Wanette. Three high schools were randomly chosen from each county to receive telephone calls. A minimum of four attempts were made to reach each of the participants.

Instrumentation

The instrument was developed with input from national and state level experts who have recently completed follow up studies (Haring, 1990; Harris, 1998; Sitlington & Frank, 1990;1994; Wagner, Blackorby, Hebbeler, & Newman, 1993). The survey instrument was designed to provide the following types of information about students: (a) background information pertaining to high school programs (number of regular and special vocational education courses taken, extracurricular activities); (b) evaluations of school experiences (i.e. attendance at IEP meetings); (c) information about current life circumstances (e.g., marital status, living arrangements, leisure activities); and (d) information about past and current employment.

The instrument was developed and evaluated by telephone, email, and by personal communication with experts in the field (Frank & Haring). The completed instrument was examined for error by other researchers in the field.

Current research indicates that parental attitudes toward independence and competitive employment are critical factors in the length of time a young adult with disabilities is retained in competitive employment (Wehman, Hill, & Hill, 1985). Therefore, the last section of the questionnaire includes questions that are devoted to these factors. Four questions designed to assess: (a) family involvement in the school; (b) history and present life of the participant; (c) attitudes about independence; (d) mobility; (e) competitive work and fear of loss of Supplemental

Security Income and/or Medicaid; and (f) family preference for the participant's living situation are included. Additional items to assess community adjustment include recreational and social satisfaction, mobility, extent of involvement in self-help groups, church activities, and whether or not the participant had encountered difficulty with the law. In any research, especially research using interview techniques, validity of measure is a critical issue. It is assumed that responses to an interview are composed of two factors. The first factor is the "true answer," or the actual information sought by the interviewer. The second factor is the response error, the variability in the respondent's answer due to all sources other than the "true answer." The response error can be defined as the difference between the "true answer" and the actual answer given in the interview (Sigelman et al., 1983). Clearly, if response error is large, interpretation of the interview data are difficult. Consequently, background concerning survey data collected from the general population was taken into account when developing the present instrument (see Appendix E for instrument).

Sudman and Bradburn (1974) have compiled a comprehensive review and analysis of response effects. A model of the interview situation and a conceptual framework for evaluating response effects has emerged from the authors' coding strategy. This strategy combined the results of numerous interview studies with an estimate of the relative importance of various response effects. This model represents the interview as containing three major components: the role of the interviewer, the role of the respondents, and the task of giving and receiving information. The response effects are viewed as a function of one of the three elements - interviewer,

respondent, or task variables.

Question wording could be the most important task variable. Bias may be introduced directly by the wording of the question (Rugg, 1941). Question length and question difficulty may influence the nature of information obtained (Sudman & Bradburn, 1974). Therefore simple and concise questions were selected for the present survey. The trend in survey research has been to not focus as much on variables as much as interviewer and respondent variables (Sigelman et al., 1983). However, the conclusion of the Sudman and Bradburn (1974) review emphasizes that neglecting task variables is unwarranted. Sudman and Bradburn (1974) stress that questions which offer the possibility of acquiescence and raise the issue of self-presentation (or create in respondents a desire to present themselves in a favorable light) can have powerful effects on a study's validity. These two important task variables will be discussed separately, beginning with acquiescence as a factor in skewing research results.

Acquiescence, or the tendency to give a "yes," "true," or "agree" response, is a topic of interest primarily within personality research. Though a large body of research exists on acquiescence (Cronbach, 1956), in most studies, emphasis appears to be on the effects of acquiescence in the interpretation of personality inventories (Cronbach, 1942).

No consensual conclusion concerning acquiescence and personality inventories has been reached. It is methodologically difficult to evaluate the effects of acquiescence on any given instrument. The items selected in the present survey questionnaire are far less ambiguous than those found on personality inventories. The

role of acquiescence remains unclear in inventories, but the wording of the present instrument makes every attempt to minimize it. The issue of self-presentation has been suggested as a possible distorting influence on response to interviews (Sigelman et al., 1983). The assumption is that respondents tend to endorse socially desirable items. Thus, response patterns may reflect the perceived social desirability of the items in contrast to the actual attitudes of respondents. This researcher presented data demonstrating a high correlation between scores on personality scales and the rated social desirability of scale items. Nevertheless, Sudman and Bradburn (1974) conclude that social desirability of response presents a generally small threat to response effect. However, the interaction of method of administration with social desirability can have a stronger impact.

Thorndike, Hagen, and Kemper (1952) compared 500 face-to-face administered inventories on psychosomatic symptoms with 500 inventories that were self-administered. The results indicated that respondents tended to present themselves in a more favorable light during the face-to-face administrations. In fact, 15% more psychosomatic symptoms were reported in self-administered questionnaires. The development of items in the present instrument reflects attention to self-presentation variables in response effect. The instrument assessed to what extent subjects' life situations are normalized.

Normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972) is defined as how closely the patterns of everyday residential situations, work environments, and social/recreational pursuits of populations without disabilities parallel those of people with disabilities. It is clearly socially desirable, according to special education professionals, to promote

normalization for individuals with mild and moderate disabilities. How families of people with disabilities perceive the concept of normalization is unclear. The limited data that exist (Wehman, Hill, & Hill, 1985) indicate that normalization, and the inherent independence of those with disabilities that construct stresses, is undesirable to many parents of those who have mild or moderate disabilities. Although previous studies comparing the accuracy of data from face-to-face interviews with that from self-administered questionnaires have documented that subjects tend to be more truthful on the questionnaires, the same finding for telephone interviews has not been documented. Apparently, no comparative studies on the accuracy of face-to-face interviews versus telephone interviews have been conducted.

The validity of the instrument is difficult to evaluate. As previously discussed, all items were assessed by national experts University of Iowa professor- (Frank, A.) and University of Oklahoma professor (Haring, K.A) who have special knowledge of and experience with follow-up studies. The feedback given was used in the design of the survey instrument and items were selected as being critical in the evaluation of each area of adult adjustment.

Nonetheless, the instrument has obvious limitations. It alone could not assess every aspect of adult adjustment. Although a number of important variables in adult adjustment, such as employment status, vocational training pertinence in high school, post high school training and self determining factors are assessed, no attempt has been made to evaluate the psychological adjustment of each individual participant. Nor will the psychological framework of the families of the individuals with mild or moderate disabilities be ascertained in this study.

Determining what aspects of adult adjustment were to be assessed was difficult. The actual assessment of adult adjustment presents a complex, multidimensional problem. Still, the validity of the instrument, as well as the validity of responses are subject to question. Few model follow-up studies exist as a basis for the present study. The field of adult self-determination is too new and unexplored to establish whether the questions asked were adequate as determinates of adult adjustment.

Debate exists over what the outcomes of public school and transitional programs should be. The Office of Special Education Research (OSERS) model holds employment as the major outcome (Will, 1984). Anything outside of employment is seen to be important only in that it supports employment. Halpern (1985) counters that community adjustment is the desired outcome of educational and vocational or transition programs. His model lists three components under community adjustment. These components are: (a) the maintenance of a residential environment; (b) the nature of employment; and (c) the development of a social/interpersonal network. In addition, Kennedy's theory and thinking on self determination is also viewed as a critical and necessary component to adult adjustment (Kennedy, 1996). The instrument used in the present study will be based on the Halpern model with an emphasis on self determination by Kennedy.

The second area of validity open to question is methodological in nature and has been previously discussed in this chapter. The issue is whether self-report or report by significant others is accurate. Additionally, is it valid to base conclusions on one or two 15 minute interviews?

The generalization of results will be a further limitation on the validity of the present study. The size of the sample can be assumed to accurately reflect the population of urban and rural Oklahoma Public Schools graduates. However, the sample is drawn from a geographically limited area and generalization to other major cities outside of Central Oklahoma is not warranted.

Another limitation of the methodology is that of the controversy of mixing informants for answers to questions about postgraduates. Although the general, broad-based follow up data can be trusted, the more personal or specific data, such as salary level and types of benefits received, must be viewed with skepticism. Because of the number of parents who do not know this information, we should only use data from graduates to address these questions. This raises a troubling issue: There is a tendency for policy makers to use existing databases even when there is reason to doubt the believability of the data. Databases from studies that did not use graduate informants on salary levels, hours worked, and benefits received should be viewed cautiously, based on the finding of this study (Levine & Edgar, 1994). And because graduates are more difficult to locate than are parents, future studies that follow this will likely be more costly and will most likely have lower contact rates.

Pilot for Reliability

A pilot survey was conducted prior to the main study. The pilot study provided additional feedback on item clarity and procedural as well as content recommendations for finalizing the instrument and methods for utilization in surrounding rural and urban Oklahoma school districts. The pilot study was conducted prior to the main study in the months of August through October, utilizing

rural as well as urban districts throughout southwest Oklahoma schools. A total of 57 participants responded to the pilot survey. During the pilot, question wording was found to be ambiguous and too easily misconstrued by the respondents on the survey and were changed in order to conduct a more thorough study. Items pertaining to family and self-determining behaviors were added to the survey. Other items added to the survey were questions that would allow for more examination of past employment behaviors as well as current living arrangements among the participants.

The primary concerns to be answered by the pilot study were the internal validity rate of such surveys and the agreement of respondents on the study. The bulk of follow up studies conducted in special education have used the parent or guardian--or a combination of parents, guardians, group care staff, relatives, and graduates--as the primary informant (Levine & Edgar, 1994).

Procedure

Interviews were conducted primarily by telephone and on occasion in person, if the situation necessitated. In every case, the purpose of the project was thoroughly explained, and informed consent was obtained prior to the interview. At the beginning of each telephone call, a script was read to the respondent to ensure accuracy and effectiveness of the survey (see Appendix F). If the participant could not be interviewed, then it was acceptable to interview the parent and/or guardian for the participant (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Sitlington & Frank, 1998). Higher functioning clients were interviewed as well as their parents. Each telephone interview was conducted at reasonable, albeit, flexible hours of the day and evening hours. Time spent on the telephone in the actual interview ranged from 3 minutes to 1

hour in length.

The main investigator conducted the majority of the interviews and trained three special education personnel to conduct the remaining interviews. The trained interviewers included two para-professionals and one professional. The para-professionals both hold a senior level university status, and are working on their bachelors degree in special education. The professional has been a special education teacher in a program of moderate mental retardation for Norman Public Schools for 6 years and is currently working on her masters degree. The interviewers were trained in three sessions, all held at University of Oklahoma, where they are students in the Educational Psychology Department. Each interviewer was assessed for professional competency, consistency, phone technique, knowledge of subject content, reliability in coding, and experience in secondary special education. Twenty percent of the interviews were rated for reliability by the researcher.

Defining Disability

This survey defined disability in the same manner as did the nationwide survey conducted by Harris and Associates (1998). A person was included in the sample of adults with disabilities if he or she (a) had a disability or health problem that prevented him or her from participating fully in work, school, or other activities; (b) reported having a physical disability, a seeing, a hearing or speech impairment, an emotional or mental disability, or a learning disability; or (c) considered himself or herself to have a mild to moderate disability or said that other people would consider him or her to be a person with a disability. It is also imperative that each individual be a high school graduate between the years 1995 and 1998. Using these criteria,

researchers screened as many households as necessary in order to generate a sample of participants who had been in a special education program in high school.

Statistical Analysis

Subgroups included in the survey included the following: (a) disability area (e.g., learning disabilities, behavioral disorders) versus nondisabled group, (b) personal profile including age (c) gender, (d) high school programs and experiences, (e) high school transition planning and services, (f) perceptions of the high school programs, (g) postschool transition services and perceptions, (h) post school outcomes, (i) social interactions within the community, and (j) self-determining behaviors. The survey data were analyzed through frequency counts, distributions and descriptive statistics Responses were reported in frequency distributions of percentages, and sometimes means. For follow up studies of this type, this is the most frequently used method of analysis (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Sitlington & Frank, 1998; Tatsuoka & Silver, 1989). Frequencies and percentages were computed for some of the questions on the survey concerning the use of alcohol and drugs and participation in self help groups. Questions of particular interest concerned the participation in the IEP meeting by the participant.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

This study investigated the postschool vocational and community adjustment of recent graduates with and without disabilities from Oklahoma high schools in both rural and urban areas. In general, this study was designed to provide comprehensive and up-to-date measures in a number of areas including (a) the participation in important life activities, e.g., employment, socializing, financial status, and lifestyles of Americans with disabilities and how they relate to the same variables in the lives of those without disabilities, (b) job discrimination and the presence of barriers and unfavorable attitudes in the workplace and in the community, (c) sense of a common identity shared by young adults with disabilities, and (d) involvement in the high school special education program and process. The participants had either participated in general education or special education classes and were randomly selected from high schools in seven different counties of Central and Southeastern Oklahoma. These counties were chosen in order to provide a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds to the study. A survey was used to obtain data concerning the graduates and information about their adjustment into adult life after high school.

The majority of interviewing for this survey was conducted by telephone. When a person with a disability or other graduating senior was unavailable for an interview, or unable to be interviewed, a proxy who was best qualified to answer questions about the person was chosen. However, for those having difficulty with

auditory delivery only, the telephone interview was supplemented by alternate methods. Surveys were sent via mail or with a faxed copy of the survey to the respondent's residence or other available telephone number. Other participants also received visual representation of the survey via a telephone facsimile or by mail. The sample was chosen to represent the true population of individuals living in different areas in Oklahoma and also of those living in rural and urban areas.

Demographics

Participants for this study were randomly selected through public graduation lists from high schools in seven counties located in Central and Southeastern Oklahoma. Counties included Cleveland County, Garvin County, Johnston County, McClain County, Murray County, Oklahoma County and Pottawatomie County. The telephone survey was administered to graduating seniors between the years 1995-1998 from high schools in these seven counties. The survey was administered to seniors who were in special education classes in high school and also given to seniors who were in no special education classes in high school. Table 1 shows the high schools that were used in the study and the counties.

Table 1

Counties and Schools Included in the Survey Area

County	School
Cleveland County	Lexington High School
	Little Axe High School
	Noble High School
Garvin County	Maysville High School
	Paoli High School
	Pauls Valley High School and Alternative School
Johnston County	Coleman High School
	Milburn High School
	Tishomingo High School
	Wapanucka High School
McClain County	Blanchard High School
	Newcastle High School
	Purcell High School
Murray County	Davis High School
	Sulphur High School

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

County	School
Oklahoma County	Bethany High School
	Del City High School
	Putnam City North High School
Pottawatomie County	Maud High School
	Shawnee High School
	Wanette High School

The sample consisted of 187 participants. These were taken from a total population of 663 who were randomly chosen and where attempts to administer the survey were made to all individuals contacted. A total of 476 individuals from the school lists chose not to give any information. Survey demographic items included (a) what relationship was the respondent to the participant, if not self-reported, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) number of children, (e) year of graduation, and (f) relocation after high school. Table 2 indicates the percentage of males and females for the two groups: (1) those who were not in special education while in high school and (2) those individuals who were involved in special education while in high school. Of the total population contacted either by telephone, facsimile, or mail, there were 110 (17%) individuals who identified themselves as being disabled, had been in special education and chose to participate. In addition, of the total population telephoned

(663), there were 77 or 12% that offered information concerning their high school years. These individuals identified themselves as not disabled and therefore, not involved in any special education programs in high school and also chose to participate in the study. From the 77participants who were not enrolled in any kind of special education program, 41 were male and 36 were female. From the 110 participants who were enrolled in some type of special education program in high school there were 21 males (19%) who completed the survey and 89 females (81%) who were willing to participate in the survey.

Table 2

A Comparison of Persons With and Without Disabilities Who Participated in the Study : Participatory Demographics (n=187)

Base	Persons with Disabilities	Persons without Disabilities
Participants by Gender	Frequency/%	Frequency/%
Male	21/19%	41/53%
Female	89/81%	36/47%
	n=110	n=77

Table 3 indicates the percentages of all participants and the respondent's relationship to the participant. Among those who identified themselves as disabled, there were 43% who were self reporting, 54% were mothers as proxies, and 3% were fathers reporting for the participant. Slightly less percentages were found among

those who were willing to participate in the study that were not disabled. Of this population, 36% were self reporting, 44% were reported from mothers, and 20% of the surveys were answered by fathers. The average age of sample participants was between 19 to 20 years old (M = 19.31; SD = 1.76).

Table 3

Demographics of Population of Participants

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
With Disabilities:			
Relationship to			
Respondent	Self Report	47	43%
	Mother	60	54%
	Father	3	3%
Without Disabilities:			
Relationship to			
Respondent	Self Report	28	36%
	Mother	34	44%
	Father	15	20%

(n=187)

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Age	18 years	41	21.9
	19 years	59	31.6
	20 years	58	31.0
	21 years	25	13.4
	22 years	4	2.1

Table 4 shows the special needs counts and percentages as follows: (a) 5.5 % or 6 were classified as OHI (Other Health Impaired), (b) 65.5 % or 72 were classified as LD (Learning Disabled), (c) 6% or 7 were classified in the Mental Retardation category (MR), (d) 8.2% or 9 were classified as (ED) Emotional Disturbance, (e) 1.8 % or 2 were classified as Hearing Impaired (HI), and (f) 13 % or 14 were classified as Orthopedic Impaired (OI).

From the sample population with disabilities, over one-half (65%) were classified as LD. As is consistent with previous studies, it was not difficult to locate these participants because many still live with their parents. Many of these participants were included in the study based on reliable information given by a significant other such as a parent, a guardian, or as self reported. With consent from six of the participants with LD, high school teachers provided additional information about disability classification.

Table 4

Percentages of Special Needs Category

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Other Health Impaired	6	5.5%
Learning Disability	72	65.5%
Mental Retardation	7	6.0%
Emotional Disturbance	9	8.2%
Hearing Impairment	2	1.8%
Orthopedic Impairment	14	13%

(n=110)

The least number of participants in the study was in the Hearing Impaired category with only 2 individuals reporting. During the interview it was noted that both individuals who were HI reported a degree of hearing loss at only slight to mild in categorical terms. One participant indicated a hearing loss of 18dB, while the other participant with HI reported a hearing loss of 25dB. Both individuals stated that they had trouble hearing distant speech. To accommodate these participants, each of them received a copy of the survey by mail or by fax. They returned the completed survey in a stamped self-addressed envelope that had been provided. In addition, a second follow-up call was made to gather data when convenient.

Table 5 shows family dynamics of participants with and without disabilities on variables such as marriage and children. Gender is also examined as it pertains to

number of children each participant had. Out of the total sample population with disabilities, 17% or 19 were married, 74% or 81 were single, and 9% or 10 were reported to be either separated or divorced. Participants with disabilities were either married, divorced, or separated more frequently (26%) than among those participants without disabilities (21%). During interviews, parents discussed at length the marriage relationships of the participants. It was noted also that participants with disabilities had children (28%) more often than the participants without disabilities (16%). Males with disabilities (n=21) had children more frequently (38%) than did males without disabilities (22%).

Among the individuals without disabilities, there was a significant amount who were not married (79%), while 18% stated that they were married. According to responses, 3% of those without disabilities had been or were currently in the process of a divorce and/or separation from their spouse. Most (84%) individuals had no children while 16% reported having offspring.

Table 5

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Demographic Information

Demographic Item	Persons with Disabilities % (n=110)	Persons without Disabilities % (n=77)	Gap in Percentage Points
Married	17%	18%	1
Single	74%	79%	5
Divorced/Separated	9%	3%	6
With Children	28%	16%	12
Without Children	72%	84%	12
Females w/children	26%	11%	15
Males w/children	38%	22%	16

Table 6 further analyzes the family structure of each category as it relates to marriage. Information shows that the category to have the largest number of people to be in a marriage relationship was that of the ED category where 3 of the 9 (33%) participants in this category were either divorced, separated or married. Participants in the LD category ranked second highest with 31% of the 72 in that group being either married, divorced or separated. Four of the participants in the LD category reported having one child and separated from their spouse. One person with ED had

two children and was also divorced. One female classified as MR reported having one child and was single. Percentages of single parents were 23% among those persons with disabilities and 9% for those without disabilities.

Table 6

Frequency of Persons Married by Category

Category	Single	Married	Divorced/Separated
OHI	5	none	1
LD	49	17	6
MR	7	none	none
ED	6	none	3
HI	none	2	none
OI	14	none	none
Not Disabled	61	14	2

Table 7 shows that in terms of relocation, almost seven out of ten (69%) individuals with disabilities (n=110) reported that they continue to live in the same town where they graduated. Of the 77 individuals without disabilities who responded to the question on living arrangements, only 32% were still living in the same town where they graduated.

Table 7

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Residency Status After Graduation

Place of Residency	Persons with Disabilities (n=110)	Persons W/O Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in Points
Relocated	31%	68%	37
Reside - same town	69%	32%	37

The year of graduation for participants with and without disabilities was also measured. Table 8 compares the percentages of individuals with and without disabilities who graduated for a particular year. Of the 1995 graduates (n=25), 28% were classified with a disability, whereas 72% were not disabled. Most participants graduated in 1996 (M= 96.66; SD = .92). In more specific terms of graduation, 13.4% (25) of the total sample population (n=187) graduated in 1995, 25.1 % graduated in 1996, 43.3% graduated in 1997, and 18.2 % graduated in 1998. Among the group of participants with disabilities, 1997 tended to be the most popular year with a percentage rate of 65%.

Table 8

A Comparison of Graduation Rates for Students With and Without Disabilities by Year

Year	Persons With Disabilities % (n=110)	Persons Without Disabilities % (n=77)
1995	28%	72%
1996	62%	38%
1997	65%	35%
1998	62%	38%

Additionally, Table 9 examined the mean graduation year for each disability category as well as the individuals without disabilities. More individuals with LD graduated in 1997 (M = 97.18; SD = .61) than in any other year. For those in the ED category, the majority of these students graduated in 1996 (M = 96.22; SD = .44). Because there were only two participants who were hearing impaired, the mean could not be established sufficiently. Among this category, one of the participants with HI graduated in 1995, while the other graduated in 1997. Among the students who reported that they were classified as orthopedically impaired, the average graduation year was 1995 (M = 95.5; SD = .51). Among the control group of students without any reported disabilities, the most graduates were in 1996 (M = 96.6; SD = .92).

Table 9

Mean Representation of Individuals and Year of Graduation

Category	Year of Graduation	M	SD
OHI	1997	97	.00
LD	1997	97.18	.61
MR	1996	96.0	.00
ED	1996	96.22	.44
HI	1995/1997*	96	1.41
OI	1995	95.5	.51
Not Disabled	1996	96.6	.92

*Note: No mean can be established; only two participants in this category.

High School Training Programs

Among key factors being assessed for quality of life indicators were the types of high school programs and training that participants were involved in during their secondary school years. Variables examined as critical components in Section I of the survey were (a) the type of program in which the student was being served in their senior year of high school, (b) types of training provided to the student, (c) types of vocational training provided, and (d) areas of need addressed on the IEP/ITP.

Program Placement

Item 8 assessed the special education program placements to identify where the participant spent most of his or her day when attending high school. Although numerous variations exist in public schools for students in secondary schools today (Edgar, 1987), those that were discussed in this study were (a) students attending general classes with a monitoring IEP, (b) resource room, (c) special class, and (d) school to work program.

Inclusive program models were practiced in rural schools in southern and central Oklahoma. Students having minor difficulties are served in the general education classroom on a monitored IEP. This type of program placement was implemented for (a) students who did not meet requirements for special education classes and classified as OHI, and (b) those students who qualified for special education services but placement in resource rooms or special classes was not conducive to least restrictive environment (LRE).

All participants with OHI and HI received instruction in the general classroom with a monitored IEP. Resource room instruction was given to those individuals with MR and 50% of those with OI. While having a physical disability does not guarantee placement in a resource class, it was reported that these remaining participants exhibited below average cognitive functioning as well as their primary disability of OI. Among the individuals with ED, all of these individuals were in some type of special classroom.

Table 10

Special Education Program Placements by Exceptionality

Exceptionality	General Classroom	Resource Classroom	Special Classroom
OHI	100%	x	x
LD	11%	86%	3%
MR	x	100%	x
ED	x	x	2%*
HI	100%	x	x
OI	50%	50%	x

*- For ED category, n = 2

Other high school program placements that were implemented on all participating high school campuses in the seven school districts were resource teacher programs. In a pull-out program such as the resource room, instruction is delivered by certified special education personnel with technical equipment provided for those who need assistive technology. Data from this study indicated that the utilization of the resource classroom where students are involved in a 1-2 hour pull-out was the most widely implemented program among individuals with disabilities in the study with 73% or 70 of the 96 participants being involved in this type of program model (see Table 10). Fourteen participants did not respond to the question. Program placements by disability indicate that 86% of those classified as LD received instruction in the resource classroom.

Seven out of nine participants with ED did not wish to answer this question. For the two individuals in the category of ED who responded to this question, they attended special classes. For one participant, Little Axe High School implemented a homebound placement as an alternative to placement in the general education classroom on campus. This setting was found to be the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for this individual as well as the one most conducive to safety for others. The other participant who responded was at the Pauls Valley Alternative school under direct instruction and all day supervision of certified special education teachers and other service delivery personnel. The classes for these individuals included reading labs, math labs, vocational training workshops, or social skills training labs.

Vocational Training Curriculum

Item 9 on the survey was to assess the method of vocational training for the individuals who were not completing an academic curriculum of study or were college bound. The most popular type of training classes during high school for participants with disabilities were Health Occupation Education (45.4%) and Home Economics Education (38.1%). Among those individuals who were LD, 56% reported receiving training and instruction in the Health Occupation fields. All seven of the participants who were MR received vocational training in Home Economics Education. This included working in the fast-food industry, retail for 2 of the participants and also home maintenance. Seven individuals with ED received instruction and training in Home Economics education. Among those students who reported having had no special education in high school 31% were involved in non academic vocational training while in secondary school. There were 31.1% receiving

training in Business/Office Education and 31.1% receiving training in Trade/Industrial classes. The remainder of the participants with no disabilities, less than one half (37.7%), were completely academic track (see Table 11).

Table 11

Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities and Types of Secondary Training Programs

Training	Persons With Disabilities	Persons Without Disabilities
Office/Business	none	31%
Health Care	45.5%	none
Home Economics	38.1%	none
Trade/Industry	2.0%	31%
Beauty/Barber	15%	none
Academic	none	38%

n=77 (not in special education); n=110 (all other exceptionalities)

Training/School-to-Work Programs

Item 10 surveyed the participants who had been involved in specifically designed vocational training programs as another component of their high school program. For those surveyed who had no disabilities, work experience in high school was most often implemented (37%) with 29 individuals reporting no work based

training at all in high school The remaining 48 individuals without disabilities reported working in the community with pay.

When examining the community school-to-work involvement for those participants who reported having been in a special education program, the percentages were (a) fifty (45.4%) received community-based placement with a job coach and weekly or monthly salaries, (b) fifty-three (48.2%) received work experience in the community with pay and without a job coach present, and (c) seven (6.4%) were enrolled in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) summer youth programs in surrounding counties of Oklahoma. Of the individuals with LD, 71% were employed in community jobs with pay and without job coaches. These individuals were given part of the school day to work and also weekend work, when applicable. Since the majority of these participants reported working at jobs that allowed them the opportunity to work weekends, they were able to work a large portion of their weekly hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

When compared to the participants without disabilities, there is a significant difference between the students who worked in the community and those who did not. All of the students who were in special education classes in high school also worked in the community at some point in high school, whereas 37.7% of the students without special education programs worked in community-based jobs. Examining gender of both groups, 9% more males with disabilities worked at some point during high school than did their female counterparts. As was also found among those individuals without disabilities, slightly more of the males (42%) reported having

worked during high school, even for a short time. This is in comparison to 39% of the females without disabilities.

Table 12

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Secondary Training

	Persons with Disabilities n=110	Persons without Disabilities n= 77	Gap in % Points
Community-Based Placement w/Job Coach and Pay	45.4%	0	45.4
Work Experience w/Pay and in Community	48.2%	62.3%	14.1
JTPA Summer Youth Work Program	6.4%	0	6.4
None	0	37.7%	37.7

As a critical component of any high school transition program, attendance at the IEP meeting has been identified as necessary for positive change in post secondary success. As required in IDEA, beginning as early as age 14, students with disabilities may attend meetings. According to Item 11, most of the students turned 14 years old during their ninth grade year (M = 3.82; SD = .633). In addition, responses to Item 12 show that 33 or 30% of the 110 students who were on IEP's reported that they did attend their meetings during their school years. It was also

reported that 77 of the 110 (70%) did not attend school meetings to plan their school programs. Item 13 assessed whether the IEP included a statement of transition services to be provided for the student. Responses for this question were unknown by most (84%) of the participants. Neither proxy nor self-reporting participants seemed to understand this item well. However, among those who did respond with a direct answer, 12% answered yes while the remaining 4% of participants with an IEP responded with a reply of no.

Table 13 gives illustrations of the areas that were addressed on the participant's IEP. This was assessed by Item 14, whereby these program areas of instruction fluctuated with the highest percentages being instruction and functional vocational services. Interviews conducted were from participants (n=109) who were willing to answer the question from the survey. From this sample, the participants of the OHI comprised 5.5% of the total sample population of students with disabilities who received instruction and functional vocational training on their IEP. Participants within the category of LD had many of the areas addressed on their IEP: 100% addressed some level of instruction, 38.5% addressed related services, 10.2% addressed community experiences, 13.8% addressed adult living skills, 7.3% addressed daily skills, and 65.1% addressed functional vocational skills.

Participants in the category of mental retardation had three skill areas addressed on their IEP during secondary school. All 7 of the participants (6.6% of the total number of participants with disabilities who reported on this question, n=109) who were within the category of MR received transition services in instruction, community experiences, and also in functional vocational training. Based on a

response rate of 109 people who responded to this question, the responses were established through conversation and elaboration on this issue. Individuals with MR and ED received living skills training within the area of functional vocational skills.

Participants in the category of Emotional Disturbance had the following services provided for on their individualized transition plan that were as follows: (a) instruction in academics appeared on all of the plans using a modified curriculum, (b) related services as such 30-minute sessions twice a month with occupational therapist, physical therapist, or speech-language pathologist appeared on 8.3% of the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP), (c) community experience such as training to work or discussion with community employers was on 1.8% of the ITP's, (d) employment objectives which might include job skill training were on 1.8% of the ITP's, (e) adult living such as skill training in social skills or personal hygiene classes were on 8.3% of the ITP's, (f) daily living skills which included such skills as cooking, transportation skills, social skills, functional reading and writing skills were on 1.8% of the plans, and functional vocational which may include all of the above mentioned skills appeared on 8.3% of the plans (see Table 13).

Table 13

Percentage of Needs Assessments Identified on the Individualized Education Plan by Disability

Disability Category	Frequency (n=110)	Percentage
Other Health Impaired		
Instruction	6	100%
Functional Vocational	6	5.5%
Learning Disability		
Instruction	60	100%
Related Services	42	38.5%
Community Experience	11	10.2%
Adult Living	15	13.8%
Daily Living Skills	8	7.3%
Functional Vocational	71	65.1%

(table continues)

Table 13 (continued)

Disability Category	Frequency	Percentage
Mental Retardation		
Instruction (modified)	7	100%
Community Experience	7	6.6%
Functional Vocational	7	6.6%
Emotional Disturbance		
Instruction (modified)	9	100%
Related Services	9	8.3%
Community Experience	2	1.8%
Employment Objectives	2	1.8%
Adult Living	9	8.3%
Daily Living Skills	2	1.8%
Functional Vocational	9	8.3%
Orthopedic Impairment		
Instruction	14	100%
Functional Vocational	14	12.8%

Employment

In addition to examining types of high school programs participants were involved in, employment was also assessed. This section discussed key variables on employment given by respondents in Section II of the survey. Results were then reported using either frequencies, percentages, or means to identify comparisons between the different groups. Variables examined were (a) career awareness and job-finding skills, (b) job stability, (c) advancement and employment benefits, and (d) job-related social skills.

Career Awareness and Job-Finding Skills

Percentages were tabulated to identify methods for gathering information and finding a job. Table 14 reports responses to access to service agencies or other methods for individuals to obtain information and find jobs were assessed. Participants were asked to respond to as many choices that were applicable to them. Among those participants with disabilities 25.9% learned of positions by talking to high school counselors or teachers. Other percentages among those participants with disabilities were (a) 21.3% obtained information about jobs through rehabilitation centers, (b) 26.8% obtained information about positions through community colleges, and (c) 14.8% obtained information through the JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) program. Rehabilitation centers and work-force centers included Moore-Norman Vocational-Technology placement and other surrounding work placement centers including Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

Also shown in Table 14 was that 72% of the students with disabilities obtained jobs using the family-friend-self network. This was the most widely used

means of locating employment. Participants without disabilities had used the family-friend-self method only 27.5% of the time. All participants without disabilities had heard of jobs through community college programs and remembered visiting briefly with counselors at local city colleges or during Career Day at school. This was indicated on the survey and also discussed during the interview. Results indicated that a high frequency method for obtaining information and job tips among the females with disabilities were rehabilitation facilities (16.6%) and community college services (13.8%).

Table 14

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Job Search Techniques

	Persons with Disabilities (n=108)	Persons without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in % Point
Item 16			
Information by High School Counselors	25.9%	15.6%	10.3
Information by Rehabilitation Center	21.3%	None	21.3
Information by Other (friends, self and relatives)	72%	27.5%	44.5
Community College	26.8%	46.6%	19.8
JTPA	14.8%	10.3%	4.5

Job Stability

Job stability was another critical area examined by assessing factors such as (a) reasons for leaving a job including being fired, (b) unemployment rates, (c) length of employment, and (d) number of jobs held since graduation. Examining the rates of unemployment among the sample population of participants with and without disabilities, a comparison of both groups indicate that participants with disabilities were not fairing as well as those without disabilities. Table 15 shows that from Item 17, of the sample population with disabilities (n=108) there were 19% that were

without a job at the time of the study. Of the sample population without disabilities (n=77), data show that only 10% were currently unemployed. Data indicates that females without disabilities were employed at a higher rate (88%) than their counterparts with disabilities (80%). It is also evidenced that 88% of the females without disabilities who participated in the study were currently employed at the time of this survey. Out of 88 responding females in the study who were in special education classes during high school, 80% of these had jobs at the time of the survey.

Job security tended to be better among the majority of males without disabilities. There were more males without disabilities working (90%) than there were males with disabilities employed (85%). Alternately, there were 5% more males with disabilities working than their female counterparts. Unemployment among males and females with disabilities (19%) was higher than the unemployment rate among individuals (10%) who reported no attendance in special education programs. During the reporting of the survey information, two participants with disabilities did not comment on this item, therefore data was unknown for them.

Item 18 reveals that the average work week for 27% of the individuals with disabilities was between 21 to 37 hours per week. However, there were three disability categories that had people working at least 40 hours per week. These categories were Learning Disabled, Emotional Disturbance, and Hearing Impaired. Data revealed that 4 out of 9 individuals classified with ED worked full time, 15% of the total persons in the LD category also had full time positions, and both of the participants with HI had full-time jobs. Table 15 shows the hours worked by individuals with disabilities that fluctuate but tend to average less than 40 hours per

week while those without disabilities reveal working more hours per week, usually 37.5 plus hours. Of the sample without disabilities, 55 participants (71%) worked full-time jobs while 14 (18 %) worked 21-37 hours weekly. One individual worked less than 40 hours per week and also attended the National Guard.

Table 15 includes work records concerned with length of employment at a job. Item 19 was designed to assess the duration or length of time an individual continued to work for the same company. For reasons not explained to the researcher, not all of the participants with disabilities responded to this question. The average length of employment for any participant with disabilities was less than 6 consecutive months (M = 2.00, SD = .000). Of those participants with disabilities who did respond to this question (n=101), 72% had not held any job longer than 6 months at a time. Among the categories of exceptionalities included in the study, 84% of the participants in the LD category had not worked at the same job for over 6 months. Of the participants without disabilities, the average length of employment was more than six months (M = 1.25; SD = .636). Among the control group (n=77), there were 84% who reported keeping a job for longer than six months at a time and only 4 or 5% that reported working for a company less than six months consecutively. Males with disabilities tended to stay at jobs for longer periods at a slightly higher percentage rate (10%) than did their female counterparts (7%).

Item 20 asked participants to respond about their hourly salary. From the sample of participants with disabilities (n=87), 28% were in jobs that paid minimum wage only. Table 15 shows that 72% of the individuals reported earning more than minimum wage. There were twenty-three individuals who did not choose to give

responses to this question. In contrast, a large majority of the participants without disabilities (94%) reported earning more than minimum wage.

Item 21 identifies reasons if the participant had ever been fired from a job. Among participants who had disabilities, 37 participants (34%) had been fired from a job at least once. The primary disability to be fired the most frequently was in the category of OHI where all 6 participants responding had been fired from at least one job. Participants in the ED category also had high frequencies of being fired. From the ED group, 4 out of 9 individuals reported being fired from a job. Individuals with Orthopedic Impairments were not fired from their jobs often. Two individuals with physical disabilities reported having been fired from a job. Of the participants responding to this item, one had been employed for the United States Postal Service, while the other was in computer sales. However, it was noted that these individuals did not consider their cause for dismissal as being disability related. Out of 7 participants with MR, only one stated that they had ever been fired. From the LD category, 29% reported having been terminated at least once. Females had been fired from jobs at a rate of 44% of the total population of females with disabilities.

On Item 22 participants were asked to give as many reasons as applied to them on reasons for leaving a job. Among the many reasons for leaving a job, the most frequently cited reasons among those individuals with disabilities included getting fired (34%), quitting for a better job (50%), and 39% stated that they did not like their

present job. Among the reasons cited for leaving with the sample population who were without disabilities were disliking the current job (42%) and 79% stated that they quit for a better job (see Table 15).

Item 23 identified reasons why the participants were not currently employed. In Table 15, it is shown that 9% of the individuals with disabilities were unable to find work as compared to 1% of those without disabilities. There are 2% of those with disabilities who consider themselves stay-at-home wives and/or mothers. Three percent of those without disabilities are homemakers. Enrollment in school encompasses 3% of those with disabilities and 12% of those without disabilities. There were 5% of those with disabilities who were receiving training in a vocational program, as well as 2% of those without disabilities also receiving training.

Table 15

A Comparison Between Those With Disabilities and Those Without Disabilities on Key Employment Variables

Variable	Persons With Disabilities n=110	Persons Without Disabilities n=77
Item 17: Employment status		
Unemployed	19%	10%
Females Employed	80%	88%
Males Employed	85%	90%
Item 18: Weekly hours Worked		
Full-time	15%	51%
21-37 hours/week	27%	19%
Part-time	39%	20%
Item 19: Length of employment		
More than 6 months	8%	84%
Less than 6 months	72%	5%

(table continues)

Table 15 (continued)

Variable	Persons With Disabilities	Persons Without Disabilities
Item 20: Salary		
Minimum wage	28%	6%
More than minimum wage	72%	94%
Item 21: Ever Fired		
Fired at least once	34%	9%
Females fired	44%	11%
Males Fired	70%	14%
Item 22: Reasons for leaving Job		
Quit for other reasons	22%	none
Quit-reason not given	26%	4%
Left for better job	50%	79%
Unskilled at Job	15%	none
Transportation trouble	27%	5%
Did not get along W/co-workers	21%	11%
Did not like Job	39%	42%

(table continues)

Table 15 (continued)

Variable	Persons With Disabilities	Persons Without Disabilities
Item 23-Not Working		
Unable to find work	9%	1%
Full/Part-time homemaker	2%	3%
Full-time Student	3%	4%
Job Training Program	5%	2%

To further explore job stability, participants were asked to respond about the number of jobs they had since graduation. Figure 1 shows the average number of jobs held by individuals with and without disabilities for that particular year. The average number of jobs held since graduation for the sample population of individuals with disabilities for years 1995, 1996, and 1997 are greater than for those students without disabilities. On average, people with disabilities changed jobs more often than did people without disabilities. The most jobs held by any one participant was from an individual with OHI who held 5 jobs since graduation. Among the sample of participants who have disabilities the largest category to reveal the most job stability is the LD category in which 33 out of 108 participants (31%) reported having had only one job since graduation. Some of these participants reported however, that the jobs they have had were construction type jobs in which they could work for a period

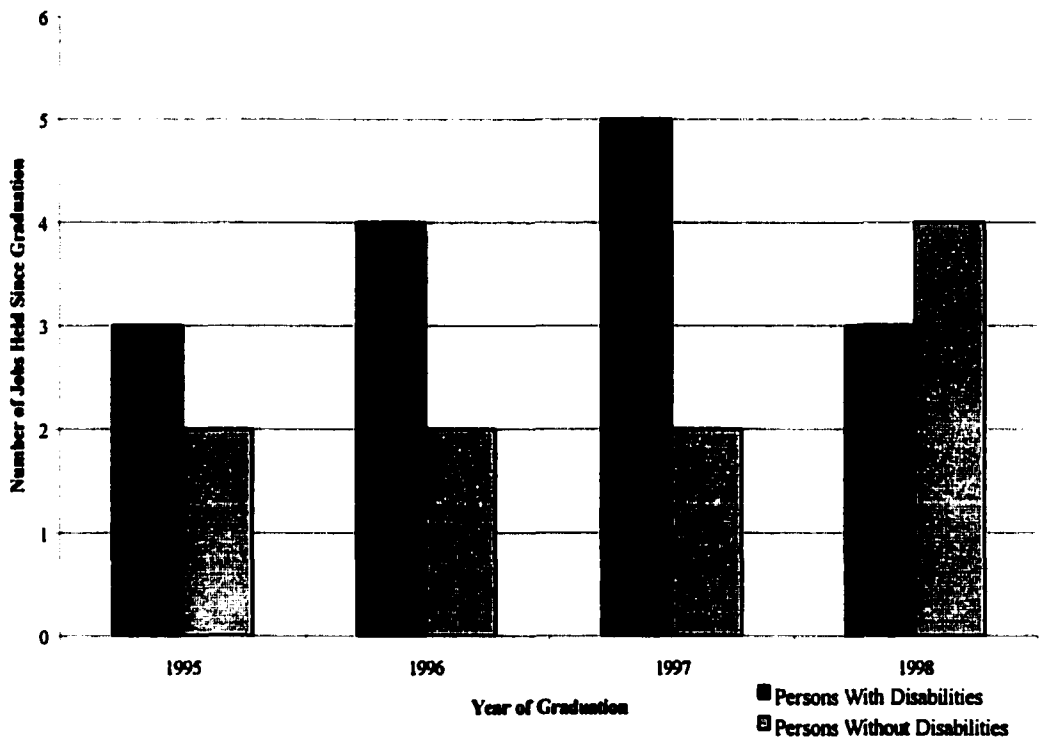

Figure 1. The average number of jobs held since graduation among persons with and without disabilities.

of time and could also take extended periods of time off. There were 15 of the 33 participants reporting having had only one job since graduation that had also been fired and rehired by the same company. There were 54 participants out of a total sample of 77 without any known disabilities that reported having had only one job since graduation.

Item17 (current employment status) and Item 6 (year of graduation) were cross-tabulated to examine percentages and frequencies among the two variables. Results were to examine whether time out of high school improved job stability. Table 16 shows current employment status and year of graduation. For participants who reported special education placement in high school, their job status improved with time out of school. For the sample of students with reported disabilities who graduated in 1995, the percentage of this sample group that had a job was 100%. Again in 1996, all of the students who graduated in this year held jobs. There were 69% of the students who had graduated in 1997 and were currently employed. In 1998, the figures rose to 71%, a modest increase between 1997 and 1998. However, data continued to indicate that time out of school does seem to perpetuate greater employment for students with disabilities.

For those students who reported no involvement in special education programs in high school, the employment picture was good. This group of sample participants did have a progression of employment trends that was opposite of those students with disabilities, however. To illustrate, 90% of the people graduated in 1995 had jobs. For those graduates of 1996, the job rate was 100%. For 1997 and also 1998, the job rate was also at 100% (see Table 16).

Table 16

A Comparison of Graduation Year and Current Job Status Between Persons With and Without Disabilities

Year	People With Disabilities (n=110)	People Without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in in points
1995 Graduation Year w/Job Now	100%	90%	10
1996 Graduation Year w/Job Now	100%	100%	0
1997 Graduation Year w/Job Now	67%	100%	33
1998 Graduation Year w/Job Now	71%	100%	29

Advancement and Employee Benefits

Item 24 was designed to assess factors related to advancement on the job. This was discussed in terms of the types of benefits received and yearly promotions as shown on Table 17. The participants mentioned that the benefits they received were based on length of service to the company and prior involvement with vocational training programs in high school. For both groups of participants, the most common benefits among the participants were health insurance, paid sick leave, and profit sharing. In discussing sick leave, 78% of the individuals with disabilities were not compensated by wages when they were sick. In Table 17 there is an indication of the gap in percentage points between those with disabilities and those without disabilities who received sick leave compensation for illness. Among those individuals without

disabilities, there were no participants who indicated that they did not know what type of benefits they received. However, 21% of those with disabilities reported that they did not know which benefits they received. Employee discounts were received by only three percent of those with disabilities; dental insurance was given to 5% of the participants with disabilities and 13.8% received some type of paid vacation.

Benefits were uneven among the two different groups of individuals (see Table 17). For example, among those individuals with disabilities, sick leave was given to 22% of the participants whereas for those individuals who did not have any disabilities, this benefit was given to74% of these individuals. Paid vacation was given to 14% of those individuals with disabilities and 56% of those individuals who were without disabilities. Health insurance was given to 30% of the participants with disabilities and 79% of the participants without disabilities.

Life insurance was also a benefit that was reported as unequally received among participants. It was reported that none of the individuals with disabilities (n=101) were receiving life insurance at the time of this survey. However, 21 of the participants indicated that they were unsure of their answer. For those without any disabilities, a total of 71% reported that they were receiving life insurance coverage. Based upon answers given during interview by respondents, it is unclear whether or not some of the participants were receiving some type of life insurance benefits from other sources such as from individual policies, family policies or otherwise.

Other types of responses that were considered in the survey were also vague and unevenly received. Dental insurance was reported by 5% of those individuals with disabilities compared to 71% of those participants who were not disabled.

Contributions to retirement among those individuals who are employed is another benefit in question with this study. Among those individuals with some type of disability, only 7% reported having any form of employer contribution to a retirement fund with the company where they were currently employed. In contrast, it was reported by 71% of those participants who were not disabled that they participated in a retirement program where they work.

For those individuals who work in service or the health profession, the benefit of receiving free meals was also surveyed. Jobs considered to be service jobs or health profession types of jobs were reported to be ones such as working in institutional type cafeterias or fast-food restaurants. Other types of service jobs also included working at ™ Walmart or ™Target. Accordingly, 52% of the sample group with disabilities received free meals at their job. Only 11% of the participants without disabilities received free meals on their jobs. There were 21% of the participants with disabilities who reported not actualiy knowing exactly what benefits they did and did not receive. No single individual from the group of participants who did not have any disabilities reported not knowing which benefits they were entitled to at their place of employment.

Table 17

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Employee Benefits

Benefit	Persons with Disabilities (n=101)	Persons without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in %Points
Sick Leave	22%	74%	52
Paid Vacation	13.8%	56%	42
Health Insurance	30%	79%	49
Life Insurance	None	71%	71
Dental Insurance	5%	71%	66
Profit Sharing	26%	51%	25
Retirement	7%	71%	64
Free Meals	52%	11%	41
Don't Know	21%	None	21
Employee Discounts	3%	32%	29

Job-related Social Skills

Item 25 assessed punctuality at work. When questioned about getting to work, there were 88 participants with disabilities who responded to the question. Among those without disabilities, again, not all participants responded to the question. There were 69 participants without disabilities who remarked about this job skill. Table 18 shows that among the participants with disabilities, 7.9% of the sample responded to this item stating that they always get to work late, with over one third saying that they

are more than 5 minutes late. Other percentages among those individuals with disabilities responded that (a) 18.2% are sometimes late for work, (b) 46.6% usually get to work on time, and (c) 27.3 % always get to work on time. Less than one-half of the participants with disabilities reported usually getting to work on time. Among those people without disabilities, well over one-half (72.5%) reported that they always get to work on time. Other percentages were (a) 5.8% were sometimes late for work, and (b) 21.7 % stated that they usually get to work on time. Job-related skills are more developed and more prevalent in those individuals without any known disabilities than those with disabilities.

Table 18

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Punctuality

Base	Persons with Disabilities (n=108)	Persons without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in % Pts.
Always Late for Work	7.9%	None	7.9
Sometimes Late for Work	18.2%	5.8%	12.4
Usually on Time for Work	46.6%	21.7%	24.9
Always on Time for Work	27.3%	72.5%	45.2

Table 19 is a comparison among genders which show that over one-half more females who reported no disabilities get to work on time more often than do females with known disabilities. There were 47% of the females with disabilities who reported usually getting to work on time, while 19% of the females without

disabilities reported that they usually get to work on time. Seventy-five percent of the females without disabilities reported always getting to work on time. When comparing males to females, 5% more females with disabilities reported always getting to work on time. Less than one-half of males with disabilities (47%) reported that they usually get to work on time, but not always. There were more females without disabilities (75%) reporting always getting to work on time than there were males without disabilities (70%).

Table 19

A Comparison Between Gender of Individuals and Arrival Patterns

Gender	Always Late	Usually Late	Sometimes Late	Usually on Time	Always on Time
Males w/ Disabilities	1%	none	24%	47%	23%
Males w/o Disabilities	none	none	5%	24%	70%
Females w/ Disabilities	8%	none	17%	47%	28%
Females w/o Disabilities	none	none	5%	19%	75%

Item 26 examined a second job-related social skill among those with disabilities as compared to those without disabilities. Table 20 shows that getting along with coworkers is more likely to happen among persons without disabilities than among persons with disabilities. Significant discrepancies in percentages of

those with and without disabilities are found. For example, among the sample group of individuals with disabilities (n=88), the percentages were as follows:

(a) individuals reporting often having problems were at a percentage of 9.2%, (b) sometimes having problems was reported as 35.2%, (c) usually getting along with others was reported at 30.6%, and (d) always getting along with others at work was reported to be 25%. For those individuals who did not have disabilities (n= 69), their responses were significantly less in some areas. To illustrate this, when asked about having problems with others at work, there were none who reported having problems often. Of those respondents without disabilities, twenty three participants stated that getting along with coworkers with disabilities was more unstable from day to day than among those without disabilities.

Table 20

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Getting Along at Work

	Persons With Disabilities	Persons Without Disabilities	Gap in Points
Often Have Problems Getting Along w/Others	9.2%	None	9.2
Sometimes Have Problems Getting Along w/Others	35.2%	5.8%	29.4
Usually Get Along w/Others On the Job	30.6%	31.9%	1.3
Always Get Along w/Others On the Job	25%	62.3%	37.3
	(n=88)	(n=69)	

Ability to get along on the job appears to be different among gender for both groups of participants. Table 21 indicates the percentages of males and females, both with and without disabilities who responded to the question of whether or not they get along with their co-workers and employers. Data show that more males (44%) without disabilities get along with co-workers and bosses more often than do males with disabilities (24%). It is also noted that more females without disabilities (56%) always get along on the job than do females with disabilities (25%). Among those individuals with disabilities, more females (25%) get along more often than do the males (24%). For persons without disabilities, more males (68%) get along than do the females (56%).

Table 21

A Comparison Between Gender of Individuals on Getting Along at Work

Gender	Always Problems	Often Problems	Sometimes Problems	Usually Get Along	Always Get Along
Males w/ Disabilities	none	11%	41%	24%	24%
Males w/o Disabilities	none	none	none	32%	68%
Females w/ Disabilities	none	9%	34%	32%	25%
Females w/o Disabilities	none	none	13%	31%	56%

Self Determination

Factors measured to assess an individual's level of self determination vary among researchers. However, for this study, three critical areas of self determination examined were (a) making decisions about future plans, (b) identifying positive and/or negative aspects of transition planning, and (c) empowerment and freedom of choice.

Section III of the survey included Items 27, 28, and 29 which were designed to access these three self determining factors. Item 27 assessed decision-making in the IEP process. Based on a sample population of students with disabilities (n=108) 49 males and females (45%) reported that they had helped make decisions for themselves in their high school programs, while 13% indicated that they did not have a part in the decision-making process regarding their program of studies. Along similar findings, results of Item 28 indicate that 46% of the population reported believing that having transition plans was helpful to them in making decisions about their future plans. Of the sample of disability categories, those individuals who were in the MR category and ED category did not attend their meetings.

Freedom of choice was examined by Item 29. There were 71% of the population of students with disabilities (n=108) who reported that they always choose their activities. The majority of the LD sample (69% or 50) reported having complete control over what they chose to do in their spare time as well (see Table 22). This is particularly true for the females in this category and other disability categories. Examining the total sample of females among all categories of disabilities, well over one-half (73%) of the total sample reported freedom of choice in their lives. In

comparison, out of the 20 males distributed among all categories of disabilities, 65% also reported a sense of choice within their life.

Participants with hearing impairments reported never getting to choose free time activities while all of those participants with MR reported sometimes getting to choose their free time. Respondents for this group, both proxies and self-reporters indicate that the participants are most often accompanied by an adult.

Table 22

Frequency of Participants with Exceptionalities and Common Self-Determining Behaviors

	Exceptionality					
Behavior	OHI	LD	MR	ED	HI	OI
Decision-Making for Males						
Yes	1	7	none	none	none	1
No	none	1	none	none	none	1
Decision-Making for Females						
Yes	5	29	none	none	none	6
No	none	6	none	none	none	6
Early Transition Plans						
Yes	6	44	none	none	none	none
No	none	7	none	none	none	6

(table continues)

Table 22 (continued)

Behavior	Exceptionality OHI	LD	MR	ED	HI	OI
Males						
Always Chooses Free Time	1	9	none	1	none	2
Sometimes Choose	none	2	1	none	none	none
Someone Else Chooses	none	2	none	none	none	none
I never choose	none	none	none	none	2	none
Females						
Always Chooses Free Time	5	41	none	6	none	none
Sometimes Choose	none	12	6	none	none	none
Someone Else Chooses	none	6	none	none	none	none

Social Domain

Section IV on the survey was used to assess the social activities and friendships established among the participants both with and without disabilities. Key indicators being assessed for this domain were (a) friendships, (b) type of social relationships, (c) recreational activities, (d) leisure activities, (e) extent of community involvement, (f) mobility, (g) police record, and (h) self-help group involvement.

Friendships

Data indicated that findings were fairly evenly distributed. Item 30 asked participants or respondents to give data about the involvement of participants and friends. Those individuals who were not disabled were asked to tell how often they did things with friends or coworkers who were disabled. In turn, those individuals who were disabled were asked to respond as to how often they did things with friends or coworkers who were not disabled. A Likert type scale was implemented where responses were (0) rarely, (1) sometimes, (2) once in a while, (3) often, and (4) very often. Table 23 shows that out of 179 total participants who answered whether or not they did things with friends who were not disabled, the majority reported positively to doing things with friends who either were with or without disabilities. More individuals without disabilities were willing to do things with people with disabilities than the opposite. For those individuals with disabilities, the percentages were (a) 6 % reported doing things with friends who had no disabilities once in a while, (b) 20 % reported doing things with friends who had no disabilities fairly often, and (c) 63% reported doing things with friends who had no disabilities very often. This percentage is somewhat lower than the reported percentage of those who have no disabilities. According to the sample population who have no disabilities (n=77), 95% of the participants reported that they do things with other people who are disabled either very often while 5% stated that they do things with others who are disabled some of the time.

Table 23

Percentage of Friends With and Without Disabilities by Exceptionality

How Often	Persons With Disabilities (n=102)	Persons W/O Disabilities (n=77)
Sometimes	11%	5%
Once in a While	6%	none
Often	20%	none
Very Often	63%	95%

Item 31 was to assess the attitudes of the participants about life and about their social status. Being happy with their social lives was also on an equal keel among the two groups of participants. Of 77 individuals without disabilities, 76.6% reported that they were happy with their social life. Of 108 individuals with disabilities who answered the question, there were 82.4% who reported being happy with their social life.

Item 32 reported that 75% of those participants with disabilities did have enough friends to visit and to do things with. Among the participants who have no disabilities, 71.4% reported having enough friends. When asked if the participant visited a number of friends per week, the answers varied, yet were consistent with the other social information gathered from the survey.

Item 33 showed that the participants with disabilities had friends as follows: (a) 40.2% reported seeing one friend a week, (b) 51.8% reported seeing 2 friends a

week, and (c) 8% reported seeing three or more friends per week. When compared to the participants who had no disabilities the percentages were: (a) 45.4% reported seeing one friend per week, (b) 33.8% reported seeing 2 friends per week, and (c) 20.8 % report seeing more than three friends per week. While the percentages for both groups of participants was similar, the people who report having no disabilities seem to have more friends than those with disabilities.

To further explore friendships by gender, data show that females with disabilities had more friends at a higher percentage rate than did their male counterparts. Females with disabilities reported visiting with friends on a weekly basis at the percentage rates of: (a) 4% saw 1 friend per week, (b) 51% saw 2 friends, (c) 26% saw 3 friends per week. Among the female population with disabilities, 19% reported having no friends to visit during the week. Among the males with disabilities, the percentages were not as high for friends per week. There were only 1% of the males with disabilities who saw 1 friend during the week, 13% saw 2 friends per week, and 4% reported seeing 3 friends weekly. However, among the participants who were not disabled, the males had more friends. Males had 1 friend per week at 21%, 2 friends per week at 23% and 3 friends per week at 43%.

Identification of participants with disabilities were examined by performing cross-tabulations among the following variables: year of graduation and number of friends seen each week. From the data, the percentages for those with disabilities showed differences in the years out of school. From the graduates from 1995, 13% reported having more than 3 friends for weekly outings. Among those who graduated in 1996 there were 17% who had multiple friendships, while 21% of the graduates of

1997 reported having 3 or more friends. There were 21% of the graduates from 1998 who reported having more than 3 friends to do things with.

Social Relationships

Item 34 was asked to identify other social aspects of the participants' lives with statements about their personal relationships with others. Comparing the data, findings indicated that more individuals without disabilities were involved in a boyfriend/girlfriend dating type relationship than were those individuals who have disabilities. Twenty-five percent of the individuals who were not married and with disabilities had a dating relationship. Among the individuals who reported no disabilities, 48% were involved in a boyfriend/girlfriend dating relationship. The typical person with a disability who had dated in the past year went out on a total of seven dates during the year. A majority of the people with disabilities who were not married (n=81) reported that they find it "somewhat difficult" to meet people to have dates with. The differences of dating relationships among percentages among both groups indicated that there are noticeable differences in social etiquette and lifestyles for these two groups of people (see Table 24). There were 39% more individuals with disabilities who reported being not involved with anyone nor are they living with another roommate or a significant other than the individuals without disabilities.

Table 24

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities on Social Activities

Base	Persons with Disabilities	Persons without Disabilities	Gap in % Pts.
Item 31			
Happy with Social Life	82.4%	76.6%	5.8
Item 32			
Ample Friends	75%	71.4%	3.6
	(n=108)	(n=77)	
Item 33			
Weekly outings With friends			
One Friend	40.2%	45.4%	5.2
Two Friends	51.3%	33.8%	17.5
Three or more	8%	20.8%	12.8
	(n = 87)	(n = 77)	
Item 34			
Type of Relationship			
G/B friend	23%	48.1%	23
Spouse	17%	18.2%	2.2
Roommate	3%	3.9%	.9
Not Involved	57%	23.4%	38.6
	(n=110)	(n=77)	

Recreational Activities

Item 35 was to access the variety of recreational activities that participants engaged in most often. Table 25 shows the frequencies among individuals in each category that engaged in the activity listed. As noted, findings among those individuals with disabilities were fairly limited to activities that did not require mobility.

Table 25

Percentage of Persons Who Engage in Recreational Activity By Exceptionality

	EXCEPTIONALITY						
	LD	MR	ED	HI	OI	OHI	N/D
RECREATION							
Hang Out With Friends	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Outdoor Sports	32%	none	none	100%	28%	100%	38%
Hunting/ Fishing	12.5%	none	none	100%	none	100%	71.4%
Indoor Hobbies	30.5%	none	100%	100%	50%	100%	21%
Movies	70.8%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	93.5%
Home Videos	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Parties/ Taverns	71%	100%	100%	100%	none	none	63.6%
Indoor Games	2%	100%	100%	none	none	none	69%

Recreational type activities were also examined in respect to a comparison between two groups: those individuals who were without disabilities and those individuals in the study who did have disabilities. For the groups, the percentages were similar in many activities for both groups of participants. For individuals who were disabled (n=108) comparisons were (a) 32.4 % participated in outdoor sports, (b) 100% hung out with friends, (c) 16 % took part in hunting and/or fishing, (d) 40.7% did some form of indoor hobbies such as cooking, sewing, painting or other, (e) 81% enjoyed going to movies, (f) 100% enjoyed and did participate in renting and/or buying videos, (g) 60.2% enjoyed going to and having parties and frequenting taverns and dances, and (h) 14.8% participated in indoor games such as board games (Monopoly, Scrabble) or others.

When comparing these percentages to those individuals without disabilities, Table 26 shows little difference in the types of recreational activities that each group of participants choose to spend their time. The two most popular recreational activities among both groups of participants were renting videos and spending time with friends. Because it was rated for all individuals, this was obviously a popular past-time for even those who were in a marriage relationship. There were more individuals without disabilities (71%) who enjoyed hunting and fishing than were those with disabilities (16%). The largest gaps among the groups of participants were found among indoor games and hunting and fishing. These activities had percentage differences that were 54 and 55 point differences.

Table 26

A Comparison Between Persons With And Without Disabilities on Recreational Activities

Activity	Persons With Disabilities (n=108)	Persons Without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in Points
Spend Time W/Friends	100%	100%	0
Outdoor-Football, etc.	32%	38%	6
Hunting/Fishing	16%	71%	55
Cooking/Sewing	41%	21%	20
Going to Movies	81%	94%	13
Renting Videos	100%	100%	0
Parties/Taverns	60%	64%	4
Indoor Games (bowling)	15%	69%	54

Leisure Activities

On Item 36, participants were asked to respond yes or no to as many leisure activities as were applicable for them. Participants responding by fax or by mail responded with a mark beside all activities that applied to them. Table 27 shows that the amounts for the individuals from the two groups of participants, both with and without disabilities, were similar in percentages. The type of leisure activities that

were enjoyed by many of the same percentages from both groups was that of visiting with family members. For this activity, 89.6% of the participants who were disabled engaged in this activity and 99% of the group without disabilities also engaged in this activity. Another activity that was closely comparable in percentage rates among the groups was that of talking with friends on the telephone. This activity was popular among 22.2% of the participants with disabilities and 22% of participants without disabilities. Participants among both groups indicated that pagers, cellular telephones and regular household telephones were usually available to them. For some of the leisure activities, there were significant differences in the amount of participants from each group. For example, for the activity of exercise, out of the participants who were disabled (n=108), more than six out of 10 (64.8%) engaged in some form of exercise on a regular basis. For the participants without disabilities (n=77), only just over four out of 10 persons (44%) reportedly engaged in any type of exercise. The group of participants who did more exercise than any other was from the group classified LD. Twenty-eight percent of the participants with disabilities considered their employment, which, in most cases, was physically demanding, a type of exercise and workout.

Table 27

A Comparison of Leisure Activities Among Persons With and Without Disabilities

Base	Persons with Disabilities (n=108)	Persons without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in % Pts.
Leisure Activity			
Watch television	55.5%	84.0%	28.5
Listen to music	16.6%	42.8%	26.2
Phone w/Friends	22.2%	22.0%	00.2
Visit w/Friends	99.0%	89.6%	09.4
Sleep	16.6%	15.5%	01.1
Exercise	64.8%	44.1%	20.7
Gardening	19.4%	74.0%	54.6
Sports	38.0%	23.0%	15.0
Other	70.3%	53.0%	17.3

Types of jobs described by respondents were those of truck and vendor drivers that unloaded merchandise at their destinations, cement mixers, asphalt road crews, farming, heavy equipment operators, construction workers, and fast-food and retail clerks.

Community Involvement

Item 37 assessed the types of community involvement the participants were interested in sharing. Table 28 shows that in comparison to those individuals without

disabilities, the people with documented disabilities did not join community events as often as those without disabilities. Going to movies was more frequently noted among those individuals without disabilities (77%) than were reported from those with disabilities (34%). All (100%) of the participants without disabilities reported that they had or were working in and around the community, while slightly over 8 out of ten (81%) individuals with disabilities reported working in the community. Church was more frequented by those without disabilities (61%) than those with disabilities (56%). More individuals without disabilities (100%) reported dining out than did individuals with disabilities (64%). More people without disabilities (84%) participated in community sports such as football, either actively or passively, than did those individuals with disabilities (75%). Going to games is considered to be passively participating in the sport.

Table 28

A Comparison Between Persons With and Without Disabilities and Percent of Community Involvement

Activity	Persons With Disabilities (108)	Persons Without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in Pts.
Shopping	100%	100%	0
Movies Out	34%	77%	43
Work	81%	100%	19
Church	56%	61%	5
Friends	100%	100%	0
Community Sports	75%	84%	9
Self-Help Program	21%	22%	1

Mobility

Item 38 examined the primary mode of transportation for participants with and without disabilities. While other modes may also be used, Table 29 shows the percentages of participants and the mode of travel used most often. Most participants were fairly mobile within the community as well as in and around their particular neighborhood area. A large percentage (57%) of the lower functioning participants with moderate mental retardation, however, largely depended on their parents for mobility. The mobility of higher functioning participants (n=104) or those

participants with mild disabilities were as follows: 43% had their own vehicles; 22 % depended on their parents; 12 % depended on friends for rides; 6 % rode a bicycle for much of his or her transportation needs; 7 % walked to their destination; and, 10% depended on city transportation such as a bus or Cart for their needs. In many cases, Carts were described as high occupancy vehicles that were equipped for individuals with disabilities for service to various locations. When comparing these figures to figures from individuals without disabilities, it is not surprising to see the difference. Nearly all of the participants without disabilities (95%) reported having their own means of transportation. The remaining 5% reported depending on parents for getting around the community.

Table 29

Means of Transportation : A Comparison Between Individuals With and Without Disabilities

Mode	Persons With Disabilities (n=108)	Persons Without Disabilities (n=77)
Own Vehicle	43%	95%
Parents	22%	5%
Friends	12%	none reported
Bicycle	6%	none reported
Walk	7%	none reported
City Transportation (cart)	10%	none reported

Police Involvement

Items 39, 40 and 41 are questions that were designed to assess whether the participant had a police record, jail time, and the nature of the offense (s) involved. Table 30 shows that a large majority of the participants in both groups reported no problems with the law. However, by and large, there were more individuals with disabilities who reported some type of police offense than among those individuals without disabilities. From individuals without disabilities (n=77), twenty-one or 27% reported encounters with the law. Among the group who had disabilities (n=109) there were 30% or 33 individuals who reported having had trouble with the law. Of those who did report trouble, the difficulties were described as minor and isolated events. The most commonly mentioned convictions or arrests reported among those with disabilities were documented on police records as (a) family or domestic violence, and (b) alcohol related incidences. Traffic violations were less for those with disabilities (8%), most likely due to lack of transportation. Yet, when a traffic offense was reported, oftentimes it involved driving without a valid drivers license or current insurance. Among those participants with no disabilities, family violence accounted for 2% of the offenses reported, while 12% were reported as traffic violations.

For the most part, all participants who reported alcohol related problems indicated that they were misdemeanors or PI (Public Intoxication). Two of the participants with ED, however, reported that their difficulty led to a DUI (Driving While Under the Influence). Of the individuals with disabilities, 18 out of the 33

(55%) who reported police records were jailed for their offenses. Of the individuals without disabilities, over half (71%) also spent time in jail for their offenses.

Table 30

A Comparison Between Individuals With Disabilities and Without Disabilities on Police Involvement

Question	Persons With Disabilities (n=109)	Persons Without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in Points
Involvement w/ Law	30%	27%	3
Time in Jail	55%	71%	16
Drug Offenses	<1%	14%	13
Alcohol Related Offenses	32%	43%	11
Other Offenses			
Family/domestic violence	9%	2%	7
Traffic Violations	8%	12%	4

Self-help Group Involvement

Attendance at self-help meetings were examined by Items 42 and 43. Participants were to include as many different types of meetings as needed. Among the choices were self-help community groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Alanon, Emotions Anonymous, CODA (Co-Dependents

Anonymous), Overeaters Anonymous meetings, or Battered Women's Group meetings. Among these, percentages were nearly the same for both the disabled and nondisabled groups of participants. Table 31 shows a comparison among exceptionalities, including those individual without disabilities who participate in 12-step recovery programs. Data reveal that five percent of the individuals with disabilities attend some form of community self-help meetings. Of the people who are not disabled there were 15% that stated they attend self-help meetings in the community.

Table 31

Frequency of Persons Within Categories Who Attend 12-Step Recovery Groups

Exceptionality	AA	Alanon	NA	OA	Other
OHI		2			
LD		6			
MR					
ED					
HI	2				
OI		7		7	
Not Disabled	11	12			

Of the total sample population (N=179) that responded to this question, most individuals reported that they did not attend any type of 12-step self-help program for

support (Item 43; M=1.91; SD = .28). Moreover, the majority of those individuals who reported regular attendance at 12-step meetings indicated programs other than those that were alcohol or drug related.

Most men and women stated that their support meetings were in the form of help for mental disorders such as depression or anxiety (Item 44; M = 4.82; SD = 1.90). Eight individuals would not respond to this question. The percentages among those individuals who are not disabled are 15% who attend A.A. meetings regularly and 17% who attend Alanon meetings on a fairly regular basis.

Moreover, participants were asked to report whether they were ever involved with community organizations such as Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Big Brothers, Big Sisters groups, or others. There were four out of ten (40%) of those with disabilities reported involvement in some type of community group, while five out of 10 people without disabilities (51%) reported involvement in a similar type of community group.

Living Arrangements

The final section of the survey was designed to access the living arrangements of participants with and without disabilities. Both groups of participants responded to questions regarding (a) their individual residence, (b) where their parents preferred them to live, and (c) difficulties with independent living where applicable.

Residency

Table 32 indicates that participants with disabilities were less likely to achieve independent living as assessed by Item 44. There were significant percentage differences in that only 5% of those without disabilities lived with their parents, while

32% of those with disabilities lived with parents, even when married. Eighteen percent of the individuals with disabilities indicated that they lived alone. When comparing the two groups, disabled versus those without disabilities, there were noticeable differences. Among the individuals with disabilities (n=109) , three out of 10 persons (32%) lived at home with their parents. Among the total sample population of individuals without disabilities (n=77) there were less than ten percent (5%) that still lived with their parents. In comparison, over seven out of ten (74%) participants without disabilities reported self-supported living.

Item 45 queried the participants further by assessing the primary reason for living with parents. While there were some participants who were married, some of these couples continued to live with either the wife's parents or the husbands' parents for support. Among the usual needed supports from relatives and/or parents were financial help and help with the children. This type of situation occurred in 40% of the participant's with disabilities homes. Among those without disabilities, 12% stated the need for financial assistance. Also among those with disabilities, 30% reported needing childcare help from parents, while there were none reported from participants without disabilities.

Table 32

A Comparison Between Individuals With and Without Disabilities on Living Arrangements

Residency	Persons With Disabilities (n=110)	Persons Without Disabilities (n=77)	Gap in Points
With Relative	7%	6%	1
Independent/Alone	18%	74%	56
Independent w/Spouse	7%	14%	7
Co-habitation	19%	none reported	19
With Parent	32%	5%	27
Difficulty W/Independent Living			
Financial	40%	12%	28
Lonely	7%	none reported	7
Chemical Abuse	7%	5%	2
Child Care	30%	none reported	30
Transportation	15%	none reported	15

Parents Preference

Item 46 asked participants to respond to where their parents wanted them to live. In 61% of the cases, the parents responded to this question personally. Some parents (34%) preferred that their children live with them to gain the necessary training needed to make more money and have better jobs. However, although there were many parents who wanted to support their children while they improved their situation, 63% of the parents indicated that they would prefer their son or daughter to live by themselves.

Item 48 assessed the concern of losing benefits. A small percentage of parents (28%) of those who were disabled, indicated a concern over losing SSI (Supplemental Security Income) or other supports for their children, especially if there were grandchildren involved. Other supports that were mentioned being received by family members were TANF, AFDC-UP, Commodity Distribution, and food stamps.

Independent Living Difficulties

Item 47 assessed any difficulties that the participants may have encountered when living independently. Length of time that the participant lived independently was not assessed. Table 32 shows significant differences among the participants with and without disabilities and the types of difficulties faced when living independently. Twenty-eight percent more individuals with disabilities face financial hardships than do people with no disabilities in this study. Also, 30% of the sample population with disabilities indicated a need for child care help from family members. In contrast, none of those without disabilities reported childcare help needed in the family structure.

The next section of results lists participants by special needs category. Because of the small number of participants in low incidence categories (Other Health Impaired, Hearing Impaired), the data on these individuals are not reported separately. The major categories that have been reported on include (a) Learning Disabilities, (b) Mental Retardation, (c) Emotional Disturbance, and (d) Orthopedic Impairment. Data results reported in the previous section are inclusive of the control group of individuals without disabilities, and thus, have not been included in this section. There are three major areas discussed: employment, living arrangements, and high school programs.

Participant Results of LD Category

A total of 72 participants who responded to the questionnaire reported that they were in this category. This composed 65.5% of the sample of students with disabilities. Within this category there were 13 males reporting with LD and 59 females who reported in this category.

Employment. More than one-half (72%) were actively employed at the time of this survey. Approximately 80% of these individuals employed were women, of which a total of six had children. Of the men, two (20%) also had children to support. Almost four out of every 10 individuals with LD were unemployed at the time of this survey. Some reported that they would remain unemployed for long periods of time. In this sample, there were 46% that earned more than minimum wage . Of those participants who worked, 56% were employed on a half-time to three-quarter time basis between 16-37 hours per week. Some of these individuals reported that they were students in vocational-technical classes, one was a homemaker, and two worked

in seasonal jobs where hours were sporadic. Of the sample population that had jobs, 84% had not been at their present employment for over six months. Less than one-half of individuals in this classification (45%) reported having only one job since graduation.

Living Arrangements. Of the 72 participants surveyed, 19 individuals with LD (27%) lived in their parent's home. Even the individuals who reported being married or cohabiting, 40% stated that they lived with either the man's parents or with the woman's parents. From the individuals who responded to the question as to the reasons for living at home, the majority stated that it was because of financial problems that they chose to live at home. Based on the survey, 32% of these individuals lived in the same town of their high school, from which they graduated. Thirty-two percent of the parents stated that they preferred that the participants live with them. Several of the parents themselves suggested that the participant live at home so that he or she could rehabilitate into a more competitive field of work. Nine percent of participants with LD lived independently or with a roommate. Seven people (11%) of this group were married, but not necessarily living independent of parental help.

High School programs. Several of the students (12%) missed many of their school planning meetings. They often stated that their parents suggested to them that if they attended, they might miss too much work in their classrooms, since most IEP meetings are held during school hours. Over one-half (55%) of this group was 14 years of age by the time they were in their ninth grade year in high school. Areas most frequently addressed on the IEP were Instruction (100%), Related Services

(38%), and Functional Vocational Training (65%). There were 86% of the individuals in the LD category who received services in resource classes with special education teachers, 11% mainstreamed in the general education classes, and 3% in special classes. Special classes for these individuals were often involving homebound placement at intermittent times of the year due to secondary health complications. Two of the participants indicated a need for homebound services due to pregnancy during high school. Other health complications were not discussed.

Vocational training for students in the LD category consisted of 71% of the participants being involved in work-study programs with pay and 29% involved in work-study based work with a job coach and pay. Thirty-nine percent of this group received intensive training in the areas of Health Occupations and Home Economics. Nineteen percent of the students who were LD received training in the field of Beautician and/or Barber Education, often referred to in some districts as Cosmetology. Three percent of the students reported having received training in Industry Education. According to respondents' answers, all of the individuals with LD in this study worked at some point while in high school. Duration of job(s) held was variable and uncertain for many students. However, all (100%) indicated that they did work some during high school. Over one -half (69%) of the participants within this group report that they choose their free time activity. Another self determining behavior that respondents reported on was that of making decisions about future plans. One-half (50%) of the participants reported that they helped make decisions about their future in high school. Although attendance at meetings was low, many stated that they had a choice in some of the activities they were involved in. There

were 61% who stated that they thought that having transition planning discussed in high school helped them make more successful transitions into the postsecondary placement.

Participant Results of Mental Retardation Category

Of the total sample population, seven (6 %) participants interviewed were in the category of Mental Retardation. One participant was male and 6 were females. All individuals with MR live with their parents with one participant reporting having one child, although none were in a marriage relationship. All but two of the participants lived in the same town as when they graduated.

Employment. All seven of the participants with MR were gainfully employed at the time of this study, according to either the participants' response or the response of the proxy giving information. None of the individuals in this sample group were paid more than minimum wage and all reported working between 21 to 37 hours per week. However, benefits had by 3 participants of this group were that of profit sharing and free meals at work. Other benefits mentioned were health insurance and employee discounts. However, it should be noted that health insurance was also supplemental of SSI. These individuals were employed in community placements, usually with job coaches. Persons with this level of disability normally are not placed in a resident home or center. These types of facilities are usually reserved for the lowest functioning individuals with MR. The individuals in this category did however report that their work experience had been with a job coach and/or with close supervision in many cases. None of the participants reported staying in one job for

longer than six months and most reported having had more than one job since graduation.

Living Arrangements. Although two participants in this sample reported living in a town other than the one he or she had graduated in, all participants lived at home with their parents. According to interview conversation, the parents of two of the participants had moved away from the hometown. All parents of this group of individuals were reported as having a preference for their living at home. Parents provided opportunities to gain independence and more living skills for daily life and work. The participants reported that they would prefer to live alone and independent of their parents. Mobility for those in this sample was not extremely broad in range. Over one-half (57%) of the individuals depended on their parents for transportation, 14% depended on friends, 14% rode a bicycle, and 14% used city buses or the Cart system.

High School Programs. Instruction, Community Experiences, and Functional Vocational Training were the primary areas addressed on the IEP's. Daily living skills were stated to be included in the Functional Vocational Training programs as needed. All of the participants in this group were in resource rooms in high school with special education teachers available with modified instruction. Several of the students reported an inclusive program including recreational and sports activities such as band, choir, and physical education. All students in this group were involved in community-based employment with job coaches and pay. All received training in Home Economics Education. Since none of the seven students with MR attended their IEP meetings, they responded negatively about having transition programs in

high school. They also had fairly negative responses about decision-making in the transition process and stated they did not get to choose their free-time activities all of the time.

Participant Results of Emotional Disturbance Category

Of the total sample population, nine (8.2%) participants were in the classification of emotional disturbance. Of these, two were males and seven were females. Most of these individuals reported that they enjoyed hanging out with their friends and movies. Over one-half of this group reported spending some time in jail for alcohol and drug related offenses. Four out of ten participants have attended at least one self-help support group meeting and at least three individuals state that they attend on a regular basis.

Employment. Of this sample group, seven out of nine were actively employed at the time of this survey. Length and job stability is vague due to incomplete data reported. Seven of the nine individuals reported an approximate total of three jobs each since graduation. They reported that they usually got along with co-workers and employers. However, they all indicated that they had been fired at least once from a job. Among most frequently given reasons for leaving jobs were being fired and also leaving because of not liking the job. One individual reported that his boss was always making demands on him. Seven out of nine participants reported making minimum wage or less and working at least 37 hours per week.

Living Arrangements. Among this category, there was one who lived with relatives and seven who lived with parents at home. One participant did not wish to report his living arrangements. Eight of the nine individuals reported still living in the

same town as graduation. None of the participants had children nor were married, although three of the females conveyed that they had had miscarriages and abortions but no live deliveries. Over one-third of the parents polled stated a preference for independent living arrangements for their son or daughter. Mobility for this group of individuals was somewhat limited. Two individuals owned their own vehicles, four participants depended on their parents, one rode a bicycle, and one preferred a bus or cart. One participant did not respond to this question.

High School Programs. Seven of the participants in this category refused to answer some questions about their attendance in high school. Only two participants reported going to his or her IEP meetings in high school. However, all nine of the ED group indicated that transition services were a major component of their high school program. Areas of focus on the IEP's were 100% instruction, 8.3% related services such as counseling, rehabilitation services, 8.3 % adult living, 8.3% functional vocational, 1.8% employment objectives and 1.8 community experience. Only two individuals would report to the type of school program they were in, which were special classes. Seven out of nine participants were involved in the JTPA summer work programs and in the Health and Home Economics Education programs. One male stated that he worked at an area geriatric center as an aide to the patients.

Participant Results of Orthopedic Impairment Category

Among the participants with disabilities, there were 14 or 13% who had as their primary disability, a classification of OI. Seven of these students also had below average cognitive functioning which was addressed as a secondary classification. While the majority of these individuals were considered only mildly disabled, two

individuals were in wheel chairs most of the time. Most of the individuals in this category were females who chose to respond to the study. One of the participants had children yet none reported that they were married. All who responded to the survey still lived in the same town as of their graduation. None reported having spent time in jail nor having any type of police record. While there have been no records of violence or alcohol abuse within the participants themselves, 7 of the individuals reported that they attend Alanon meetings. In addition, other members of this category attended meetings for stress-related disorders such as depression, anxiety, and mood swings. Four participants stated that they enjoyed outdoor games and sports when appropriate for their disability and all enjoyed hanging out with friends.

Employment. All of the individuals reported that they were actively working, but one-half of the jobs paid minimum wage. However, several of the participants reported favorable conditions for upcoming raises and benefits by the company. They reported fairly good work social skills in that they usually were able to get along with co-workers and were usually punctual. Currently, one-half of the participants had sick leave. Answers pertaining to health benefits were confusing and should be interpreted with caution. Some of the participants did not know what benefits they were receiving, while others were also including their Medicaid insurance with company insurance. Job stability was fair among this group in that 50% of the group had had only one job since graduation, but jobs were not maintained for more than 6 months. The majority of participants worked between 19 and 37 hours per week.

Living Arrangements. All participants with OI live with their parents, although some were extending themselves out into the community and getting ready

to move into housing units by themselves. Two were planning to move into assisted living housing near their hometown. The majority of the parents indicated a preference for more independence among the participants. Mobility among this group was fairly good. Approximately 28% drive by themselves with assistive equipment such as booster seats and devices attached to the steering wheel. Other adaptives mentioned that were used for mobility enhancement were elongated visors, an addition that is clipped onto the regular visors typically used for those with shorter legs and torsos. Fourteen percent depended on their parents for transportation. One person rides a bicycle and 7 individuals use city carts and buses.

High School Programs. Instruction, and Functional Vocational were the primary areas addressed on the IEP while the mode of classroom program in high school was a general classroom for 50% of the participants and 50% in resource classrooms. Vocational training was primarily in the community and with a job coach and pay. The primary program of interest for these individuals was in the Health Profession. One individual reported that his goal was to be a nurse. At the time of the study, he was enrolled in a two-year postsecondary facility. When examining these individuals abilities to choose for themselves, they indicated on the survey that they always choose their free time. About one-half of the individuals were positive that they helped make decisions about their future planning while in high school. As indicated by responses, they all attended some of the meetings at school.

Summary

This chapter described the results obtained from analyses of the follow-up survey of high school graduates with and without disabilities. Analyses of the data

indicated that there are significant differences in quality of life indicators for youths with disabilities versus youths without disabilities. Interviews indicated that more remains to be improved upon in high school special education programs in order to ensure success for students with mild and moderate disabilities after high school.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Follow-up studies (Affleck et al., 1990; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Halpern, 1990; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Harris & Associates, 1998) that have been conducted on the adult adjustment of individuals with mild and moderate disabilities after high school tend to identify certain characteristics that are inherent to the attainment and maintenance of a quality of life suitable for a measure of success. Special education as a field has come a long way since 1984 (U.S. OSEP, 2000). Transition today is seen as more than providing service routes in the individual's movement from high school to employment. Holistically, transition is seen as a comprehensive approach to educational program development consisting of an alignment of student goals with educational experiences and services.

Since the 1980s, federal law has underscored the need for comprehensive transition planning and broadened its focus. The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that: (a) is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including vocational training, adult services, independent living, or community participation, (b) is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account student preferences and interests, and (c) includes models of instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objective, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living

skills. IDEA also states that transition planning must be part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and begin at age 14. By age 16, the IEP should contain a statement of needed transition services for the child. Further, students must be invited to attend the IEP meetings if the purpose of the meeting will be to consider the student's transition service needs (U.S. OSEP, 2000). It is within this framework that this study has been conducted.

When considering a fundamentally broadened focus on what constitutes success in life, researchers (Halpern, 1985 & 1993; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990) have discussed several indicators that have been identified as fundamental to an adequate quality of life. Findings from this study indicated that Oklahoma special education students have not been as successful as those not in special education programs with regard to postsecondary attainment of quality of life indicators such as securing competitive positions in the workplace, social activities, community involvement, self-determining behaviors, and living arrangements. Each of these indicators are perceived in today's transition literature as pertinent to evaluate when discussing the way a person lives his or her life. Not only is employment important but also, how an individual fares in the community is also viewed as critical to quality of life. While differences among factors such as independent living status and self-support might be considered insignificant, the majority of life-achievements continue to be a struggle for the individual with disabilities.

Response Rate

With a 28% response rate, the participants and proxies who responded were cooperative and generous with their answers. On average, the majority of participants

responded to the survey questions via the telephone interview. However, there were some participants, including those with hearing impairments that needed additional methods of responding to the survey. Telephones were usually available to the participants or the proxies. Several of the respondents used cellular telephones and pagers to conduct communication with the researchers.

In the current study, there were more individuals with disabilities who were willing to respond to the survey than without disabilities. Besides being a state with large populations of children in special education (see Appendix H for exact counts), other reasons for the large percentage of special education participants can be explained by both geographical factors as well as economic factors. Moreover, there was also greater numbers of females with disabilities involved in the study than were males with disabilities. Geographical and socioeconomic factors contribute to both of these results. When contacted, the females in the study were more willing to take the time and respond to the survey questions. In addition, there were more individuals with disabilities at home due to unemployment or because they only worked part-time. Another reason for the large percentage of special education participants was supported with the number of students with disabilities still living in the same community as their graduation, making them more accessible. The individuals with disabilities (63%) were less difficult to contact due primarily to them living in the same town as when they graduated and still living with their parents. This living situation found among those with disabilities is not uncommon and is consistent with other studies (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990).

In recent years, society has seen more and more females being classified and served in special education classrooms. In the Harris Survey (1998) conducted by the National Organization on Disability (NOD) the inclusion of females in special education was reported. In 1986 there were 44 males per 1000 individuals with disabilities and 56 females per 1000 individuals with disabilities. In 1994, again there was an increased amount of females (55/1000) over males with disabilities (45/1000). In 1998, NOD reported 45 males per 1000 with reported disabilities and 55 per 1000 females with disabilities. Even though it is suggested that the female population of special education constituents are increasing, it is unclear as to the exact reason why more females responded to the survey.

Some categories of disabilities within the scope of the study were either small in numbers or not represented in the sample population at all. Hearing impaired participants were small in number. Sulphur High School was surveyed and indicated that the individuals in this study with varying degrees of hearing loss had attended the Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur, Oklahoma.

There were no respondents who were classified as Visually Impaired who participated in the current study. One assumption for this lack of participation is the fact that VI is a low incidence category among the participating counties. According to the Oklahoma Child Count Data sheet for December 1, 1998, the total number of individuals served under the classification Visual Impairment (VI) that were of participating age (18-21) was 21 total. Of the individuals age 22 and over, there were none being served. The total number of children receiving special education classified as VI and between the ages of 18 and 21 were 21 total. Other low incidence

categories include Speech or Language Impairment, Deaf-Blindness, Multiple Disabilities, Autism, and Traumatic Brain Injury (Factbook, 1999).

Effects of Living Arrangements

More graduates with disabilities than without continue to reside in the same town as graduation. The individuals who were classified as ED also continued to reside in the same town with the exception of one person. In conversation with the individual, reasons for leaving town were because of reputation, discrimination, or police trouble.

While data reveal that the majority of participants continue to reside with their parents, it was not uncommon to have a household that also included grandparents. Some participants stated that their grandparents or their grandparents by marriage lived in the same household or in close proximity. Typically, many of the survey questions were answered by the parents of the participants with disabilities. While results indicated more persons with disabilities (41%) were available for questioning, usually help was given by the parents on certain parts of the survey. Parents of participants with and without disabilities were used as proxies for the participants with slightly different results. Parents were used as proxies for 63 of the participants with disabilities and for those without disabilities, parents were used as proxies in the homes of approximately 49 participants. Although nonsignificant, this was slightly more than those without disabilities. Among the participants with disabilities, if a proxy was used, it was usually the mother who responded in the majority of cases. The majority of the participants who gave consent for the study had been out of school for two to three years. Compatible with other researchers' conclusions,

previous researchers have called these first few years out of high school the floundering years for most students with disabilities (Halpern, 1990). From conversations, many of the participants with disabilities move from resident to resident and from job to job. Participants without disabilities appeared to be slightly more sure of themselves and of their futures. Some, however, were as unsure about their future as those with disabilities.

The data concerning living arrangements were nonconclusive. As with other studies (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; LaPlante, Kennedy, Kaye, & Wenger, 1996) this research showed that the majority of the participants in the study, both with and without disabilities, were single. Respondents were hesitant to give details about their living arrangements.

It was more likely to find children in the household when one of the females of that household had any type of disability. In a recent study conducted by the National Organization on Disabilities (1998) individuals were asked to respond to whether having a disability had any effect on having children. Responses indicated that 13% of the people polled suggested that having a disability prevented them from childbirth. However, 68% stated that having a disability had no effect on them having children. Other studies have indicated that having children is not uncommon among those with disabilities (Blackorby, 1991, Hasazi et. al, 1989).

Many households in the current study depended on outside community assistance for sustenance. Participants with and without children were recipients of Oklahoma welfare programs such as AFDC, AFDC-UP, TANF and other aids from the government. There were only 28% of the parents who were concerned with losing

the SSI that was being provided to their children as well as the other assistance programs that their grandchildren were involved in. Many households consisted of three generations of individuals that included not only the parent and their son or daughter, but also their son or daughters' children. However, 34% of the parents still agreed that living at home for their children was healthy and that this would allow for the help and stability needed for their children. Parents indicated that they knew their son or daughter needed to continue with a trade school or community college night school. Most parents wanted to help their children become more productive citizens, especially if there were grandchildren involved.

Since less than one-half of the individuals with disabilities had their own vehicles for transportation, mobility among the participants would be considered less than adequate. When examining the percentage of individuals with disabilities who were always late for work or sometimes late for work, often the cause was said to be lack of transportation. Some individuals reported not having a drivers license, yet having access to a vehicle. Community events were often attended mainly because of their geographical location. Family functions were also attended often when they were nearby.

Effects of High School Programs on Graduates

High school programs have been revised by Congress to include transition planning from secondary settings. Because of the continuing failure of many students with disabilities to make positive adjustments to adult life, transition services remain a national priority (Halpern, 1992, Will, 1984). In 1990, a transition mandate was included in the Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act,

renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 101-476). To be successful, transition programs need to include students in the IEP process for several reasons: self-determination and self-advocacy training, involvement in the ITP process, and collaboration among members of the multidisciplinary educational planning team.

Data from the present study indicated that only a small percentage of students (30%) attended any of their IEP/ITP meetings while attending high school. This is significantly lower than the findings that were reported by Hasazi, Furney, and Destefano (1999). These researchers studied the degree to which school districts were implementing the transition mandates. It was noticed that most teachers (82%) invited students to their ITEP (Individual Transition/Education Plan) meetings. However, caution should be taken when comparing data from this study to the data reported by Hasazi, Furney, and Destefano (1999) because of semantics in recording results. It is unclear as to whether the students in the previous study were invited and did attend or invited but did not attend.

Based on this survey data, most individuals did not know whether or not there were transition services included in their educational program. Of the few that were knowledgeable about this issue, most answers were positive. Even though the majority of individuals who responded to this question did not attend IEP meetings, they continued to report somewhat of a positive outlook about their future because of the transition services provided in high school. The students with MR and ED did not attend meetings in high school. Also noted in the interview were responses from fathers that they were often not invited to the IEP meetings. Several reasons given

were that some felt uncomfortable about attending, while others stated that they were not invited. Other reasons given were that parents did not want the student missing class work.

In general, according to these data, schools in central Oklahoma are making attempts to follow the IDEA guidelines for transition planning. These mandates are to ensure that the development and delivery of transition services for students with disabilities receive serious and overdue consideration (Reiff & deFur, 1992).

Following the inclusive model, the majority of individuals were served in the general education classroom with a 1-2 hour pull out to a resource room. This was identified among the majority of students with LD, MR and OI. All of the OHI category spent their day in the general education classroom. Many of those served under the classification of OHI were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). These are diagnoses that are not considered a classification that is served under a special education category. Also, one participant being served under OHI was placed in that category because the parents had rejected the classification of ED. As a result, in order to serve the participant, the MEPTS (Multidisciplinary Evaluation Plan and Team Summary) had indicated that she could receive instruction under the category of OHI.

According to data results, there was a small percentage of individuals that had been served part of the day in a special classroom, yet these people were classified as LD. These participants received instruction in special classrooms because their primary disability was LD, even though secondary disabilities were present. One participant was also epileptic, thereby making his secondary disability category as

OHI. Some of the participants with one primary classification given also received services because of other secondary disabilities. It is not uncommon to see individuals with one disability also have other secondary disabilities to contend with (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Karpinski, Neubert, & Graham, 1992; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985). Two participants with ED reported receiving some of their education in the alternative environment and also that they had enjoyed the surroundings.

Administrators are undoubtedly taking cautionary stances against the data that has been reported concerning the transition of students with ED. Recent data, which utilizes multi-district or statewide samples, indicated that individuals with ED, in general, had nominal levels of success in making the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Findings included small proportions of individuals attending training programs (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Frank & Sitlington, 1996). Although school officials were not formally interviewed for this study, recent visits to the schools show that administrators at Pauls Valley Schools and also at Lexington High School are taking precautions against the not-so-positive outlook that their graduates in the ED program as well as graduates with disabilities in general are facing. The results of this study may have been affected by the various strategies and motivational techniques utilized by these schools, such as the alternative schools.

Training programs for specific job skills were examined and found to be very useful among those participants with disabilities. Though enrollment in vocational education courses appeared to be scattered throughout multiple vocational offerings, graduates with disabilities were most frequently enrolled in health education, home economics and barber or beautician courses. Job descriptions included nurses aides,

geriatric care, hospital attendants, retail and fast food restaurants. It was noted that the vocational education courses were more popular and more frequently taken by students with disabilities than by those individuals without disabilities. Most individuals without disabilities remained on the academic track until graduation. After graduation, many were enrolled in two-year colleges, community college night classes for college credit, or university settings. Some were enrolled in vocational training programs. Correspondingly, graduates with disabilities earned almost five times more vocational education credits than the graduates without disabilities. Most of the participants who were enrolled in these courses were given time during the day to work. For the most part, many of the seniors would attend school during the morning hours and go to work during the afternoon hours. Many worked during weekends to complete their weekly hours.

Most participants with disabilities reported some form of training in high school. Those working with the JTPA Summer Youth Work Program did so because of eligibility requirements. A percentage of individuals participated in this program because of their economically disadvantaged status. Participation was based on the number of household members and the income into the household. One participant reported living in a family of three with income less than $14,200.00, which qualified him for the JTPA program. For several of the respondents who participated in this program, they were given needed training to find work and case workers to help maintain their positions. Data revealed that none of the participants with disabilities were enrolled in academics. The participants who were not enrolled in academics were gaining academic credit while also receiving credits in their

vocational training classes. It was also noted that because academics were not their primary curriculum, they did not wish to identify that area. However, a small percentage of the participants with disabilities were enrolled and attending classes at a two-year college. Many of the participants without disabilities who were considered to be taking the academic track indicated that they had gained vocational or specialized training in various fields through community college night programs or through four-year universities. Some reported attending classes at University of Oklahoma and also at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Effects of Employment Patterns

Much of the recent debate concerning the need to restructure secondary special education has been prompted by follow-up studies documenting the employment patterns and outcomes for young adults with disabilities (Affleck, Edgar, Levine, & Kortering, 1990; Edgar, 1985, 1987; Roessler, Brolin, & Johnson, 1990). The employment status of individuals with disabilities is not up to an even keel with those without disabilities.

A critical component in the employment process involved the level of awareness about different careers that were available to graduating seniors and how to locate jobs. Dynamics reviewed in this process could include, but were not limited to, identifying certain information about a particular job of interest, such as salary, description of duties, how to find a job, and training needed to do the work. Since respondents could choose as many methods of job contacts used most often, percentages shown were erratic in numbers. While all participants without disabilities reported using a community college for information, some of them also gathered

information from their high school counselors, vocational counselors, and teachers as well. Information from relatives and friends to obtain employment was highly popular among those participants with disabilities. During the interview, the proxies for most of these participants indicated that the participants had gotten jobs based on relatives that already worked for the company. A few of the individuals without disabilities were employed at family-owned businesses.

That rural special education students fare just as well as urban special education students in terms of obtaining employment has received some support in the literature (Karpinski, Neubert, & Graham, 1992). In the study conducted by Karpinski et al., 1992, both the graduates of special education and the dropouts of special education classes fared well in terms of getting a job after exiting the school system. Similar results have been reported among individuals with disabilities who have graduated and were conducted in rural settings (Cobb & Crump, 1984; deBettencourt et al., 1989).

The participants with disabilities, both male and female, were unemployed or underemployed at a greater percentage rate than those without disabilities. Even though most of the participants in this study were considered to be actively employed at the time of this survey, the majority were in jobs that were of three-quarter or part-time status only, which would lead to an underemployed status. Job titles or responsibilities reported by the participants were most often in service occupations. Along with other prior studies that compared employment outcomes of persons with and without disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996;Harris & Associates, 1998) this study indicated that youth without disabilities fair better in the work world than do the

youth with disabilities. Research data from other follow up studies reveal that, normally, more individuals without disabilities are more competitive and have jobs more often than do individuals with disabilities (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Harris & Associates, 1998; Hazasi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). Blackorby and Wagner (1996) indicated in their study that while there have been substantial gains in many areas, substantial gaps still remain between the employment trends for those with and without disabilities.

This study also indicated that even though there are more females with disabilities finding jobs, they are still underemployed if not unemployed. Twenty percent of the females with disabilities in this study were unemployed. To further complicate the issue, while a large majority of females identified themselves as employed, over one-half of them were in jobs that were only part-time. Most all were underemployed. The underemployment and unemployment of women with disabilities is generally supported by national and statewide follow-up studies (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Hazasi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985, NOD, 1998). The underemployment of women with disabilities raises question of concern such as whether or not these jobs are deemed as competitive in nature. In short, do they provide financial security for the people who work them? Are there benefits and long-term advancement connected with the position? Answers to these questions are obviously not positive since evidence shows that there were some people with disabilities in this study who were receiving financial aid from state and federal welfare programs. Other key factors that indicate low-paying jobs were reported such as still living with the parents because of needing help with childcare or finances.

Appendix I gives an indication of the percentage of children under the age of 18 that receive TANF/AFDC aid for the specific counties used in the study. As noted, there were high percentages of children who received federal aid. The chart indicates the number of child recipients of AFDC during FY 1997 and the average monthly number of child recipients of AFDC (Basic and Unemployed Parent) and also TANF for 1997. Rates are displayed as the percent of the total child population. This indicates that parents of children under 18 cannot adequately maintain households without financial help. With factors such as those mentioned, it is apparent that special education is not preparing female high school students for acceptable levels of employment after graduation.

To further compare statistics of county employment opportunities around the state, employment rates for selected counties used in the study have been examined. To substantiate employment findings for participants with disabilities, information was taken from the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, Inc. (See Appendix J for unemployment rates of the counties that were studied in this study). The unemployment rates shown measures the percent of the population searching for work. The rate is generated by dividing the total number of unemployed by the total number in the labor force. Because these official figures do not distinguish between part-time and full-time workers, do not count underpaid working poor and do not count workers who have given up looking for work, they are commonly understood to underestimate the true level of unemployment in a community (Factbook, 1999). The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities in all counties was high when compared with county by county rates.

Amount of income and advancement as well as benefits received were other aspects of importance to the survey team. Not all participants would respond to this question for unknown reasons. Although evidence of employment was present among those with disabilities, salary and benefit provisions to the employees are in question. Compared to the participants without disabilities, those with disabilities did not make as much per week in salary. It was reported that over one-half of the participants with disabilities earned over minimum wage. However, this meant no more than $6.00 per hour for most. Most of the fast food restaurants pay minimum of $5.15 (Oklahoma State Department of Labor, March 7, 2000) for non-experienced new hires. With one or two years experience in the fast food business, many chains pay range is $ 5.25-$6.25. As a whole, while many are barely making more than minimum wage, it is still a far cry from being adequate to maintain a household. More likely than not, persons with disabilities are making minimum wage.

Some participants in the study were unable to give complete and sufficient data about the types and amounts of benefit coverage they had with their current employers. Most people are not intrinsically motivated to work; they need decent pay and reasonable fringe benefits. Young adults with disabilities are no different. Opportunities to receive time off for illness and vacations, and to be enrolled in insurance programs is viewed very positively (Wehman, 1997). While these are important aspects of job satisfaction (Halpern, 1994; Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Wehman, 1997), training in understanding job benefits and company policies are often overlooked in many career awareness training programs. According to Morgan, Gerity, Ellerd, and Blair (2000) in many cases, youth nor their families have been

properly informed of their rights in employment benefits or other company policies. Just as job-related social skills are often misunderstood and undervalued in importance, Blackorby (1996) reported that students with disabilities often lack in knowledge of company policies, procedures and expectations. In some performance evaluations, adults with disabilities were unable to follow through with some of the company's fringe benefits and expectations because of the inability to fully understand the technical language used in the reports. According to the national study conducted by Harris and Associates (1998), when asked about the main reason for not getting the medical help needed, answers were as follows: (a) five percent paperwork or bureaucracy too difficult, (b) too nervous or afraid to ask about benefits and money, and (c) not sure what to do. However, as youths with disabilities become more frequently noticed in their attempts at competitive employment, career awareness programs are enhancing and upgrading their curriculum.

Competitive pay and compensation arrangements are often hard to find for young people with disabilities who are starting their vocational careers (Wehman, 1997). In this study, fringe benefits were less likely to be given to individuals with disabilities than those without disabilities. Among those with disabilities working in food service or retail such as convenient stores or grocery stores, there were sometimes other alternative ways to make up for illness and time away from work. For example, if the participant did not actually have any paid sick days accrued, company managers would allow them compensation days. Under this system, rather than lose time, the employee could work the sick days out. Another serious situation

for many with disabilities is that oftentimes, companies do not consider part-time employees as eligible for benefits.

The data concerning health insurance was often misconstrued. Some participants were unsure of their provider for their health care. In conversation one individual stated, " I just go to the ER room and I don't worry about the money part". One inference to consider with health insurance is the influence of Medicaid with many individuals receiving special services in high school. The participants who did not receive any type of special education services in high school nor community services were often not eligible for any type of federal aid such as SSI (Supplemental Security Income) or Medicaid.

In addition, prior studies have reported cases of job discrimination by being denied health insurance because of one's disability (Chaffin, Spellman, Reagan, & Davison, 1971; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; NOD, 1998). Among health insurance recipients, there continues to be a tremendous difference of employee benefits given to individuals with and without disabilities (Affleck, Edgar, Levine, & Kortering,1990; Blackorby & Wagner,1996; Coonley, 1980; deBettencourt, Zigmond, & Thornton,1989; Haring, Lovett, & Smith,1990). Some of the female participants reported receiving medical help such as prescription drugs through rehabilitation services. These were state and federally funded programs in surrounding counties.

Other aspects of the employment picture were examined with regard to dependents. Having children to support appeared to be deciding factor in women's employment decisions. Percentages reveal slight differences between the presence of children among those with or without disabilities. Relatively equal numbers of

individuals with and without disabilities were married, with slightly more with disabilities having children.

Studies differ somewhat in their results concerning time out of high school and job stability. There are some studies that indicate no significant differences in the ability to maintain employment and the amount of time out of high school (Karpinski, Neubert, & Graham, 1992). This study, however, corresponds with other studies in the literature that support increased job stability and time out of school (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990). From this study, job stability for those with disabilities is consistent with findings that indicate change. Length of time out of high school was noted in response to work history and experiences. While length of time appears to be a positive component, it is difficult to assess employment variables among individuals who have not been out of high school very long. Employment and other life variables are also affected by this short time out of high school. This is again indicated by the present research in that people with disabilities who graduated in 1995 had fewer jobs since graduation than the graduates with disabilities who graduated in 1997. The average number of jobs held for those with disabilities was 3. Participants without disabilities did not show a significant variation in the number of jobs held since the time of graduation to the present time of the study.

Prior studies conducted to establish that employment rates improve with time out of school has received some support in the literature (Kim & Wright, 1984). In the Kim and Wright (1984) study, general employment from participants with and without disabilities, increased from 17% unemployment in the first year to 13% during the third year. Figures in the general population (Halpern, 1973) show a higher

unemployment rate for youth, which may reflect the higher numbers of young adults enrolling as full-time students in postsecondary training or college. Difficulty arises when speculating about causes for such a drastic fluctuation in employment trends among young graduates. One could only surmise that factors from the economy or the school programs initiated in those early years might have influential consequences upon its graduates. Or, one could surmise that the increased employment rates over time is an indication that individuals with disabilities are making attempts at transition as a developmental task. The major developmental task of making a preliminary step into the adult world is often demonstrated through successful employment (Levinson, 1978).

During high school, differences existed between graduates with and without disabilities who worked. Graduates with disabilities were much more likely to have a job during high school than graduates without disabilities. More students who had been in special education classes in high school also worked in community-based jobs during high school. This could be influenced by social and economical factors of many students who are involved in special education. Studies (Karpinski, Neubert, & Graham, 1992; Mithaug & Horiuchi, 1983; Fardig, Algozzine, Schwartz, Hensel, & Westling, 1985) indicate that participation in vocational education courses and paid work experiences during high school often predict postsecondary employment. While this was somewhat supported within this study, results also showed self determination among many of the participants as low and oftentimes, neglected in locating employment.

Job-related social skills for participants with and without disabilities were reported because of their importance in maintaining employment. Highly likely, this could be one factor influencing the job stability among those who participated in the study. Based on prior studies, the lack of job-related social skills accounted for a large percentage of job losses for those in the studies. Staying employed tends to be difficult for individuals who display inadequate social skills while on the job. In other words, youths with inadequate social skills tend to have difficulties on the job with employers and co-workers, thus leading to unemployment and/or underemployment and poverty (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1991).

There are other studies (e.g., Schloss 1987;Okolo & Sitlington 1986; Wehman & Kregel 1989) that note that job-related social skills deficits exhibited by adolescents with disabilities account for job loss more than any other reason. These same studies report that social skills account for large proportions of problematic situations encountered by individuals with mild disabilities. Two primary job-related social skills were included; getting along with others (co-workers and employers) and being punctual to work on a regular basis. In this survey, persons with disabilities did not get along as well with other employees. Data reveals that participants without any recorded disabilities have higher percentages of always getting along with co-workers and employers than those reported by individuals with disabilities. There are numerous documented reasons why individuals with cognitive disabilities are terminated from their jobs or never get hired in the first place. Reports of job retention rates tend to vary from study to study (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Ford, Dineen & Hall, 1984; Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Halpern, 1992).

Aspects of the Social Domain

Happiness, friendships and the ability to involve oneself in the community are important components of quality of life indicators (Goode, 1990; Halpern, 1993). The consensus is that even though socializing has improved for young adults with disabilities, it still falls behind the socialization process and skills of those without disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Elksnin & Elksnin, 1991; Harris & Associates,1998).

Participants with disabilities in the current study do not socialize as much nor as often as those participants without disabilities. Consistent with previous research, the participants with disabilities in this study showed a positive interchange of friendships among those without disabilities but still did not socialize as much as those without disabilities. On the contrary, percentages of individuals without disabilities that have friends with disabilities are greater than those with disabilities who have friends without disabilities.

The NLTS identified youth as socially isolated if they saw friends less often than weekly, did not belong to a school or community group, and were not married, engaged, or living with someone of the opposite sex. Overall, social isolation was experienced by 6% of youth with disabilities who had been out of school 3 to 5 years (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The general findings in this study were that most individuals with disabilities have trouble maintaining friendships, there were none who would admit to being with no friends during the week. Most participants stated that they had many friends.

As youth were out of school longer, their frequency of seeing friends declined. The frequency of seeing friends was significantly higher for females than for males with disabilities. In terms of gender and friendships, more females with disabilities had friends at a higher frequency than did their male counterparts. However, when comparing females with disabilities to females without, it was suggested that the females without disabilities had more friends more often. In turn, friendships were more likely to be found among the males without disabilities than among those with disabilities. Based on conversations with the males with disabilities or their proxies, many of the male participants stated that they were loners in many respects. They indicated a tendency to spend time with their families or children, or by themselves. In summary, findings from this research appear to be consistent with other studies that indicate that persons with cognitive disabilities often have trouble attaining and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Overall, the participants were fairly engaged in recreational activities within and around the community. With exceptions, most of the participants within both groups, disabled and nondisabled, had some form of recreational activity that they participated in at least once a week, if not more. According to telephone conversations with the participant themselves and also with proxies, many of the participants enjoyed some form of recreation and/or leisure sport more than once a week. However, while there were social activities among those with disabilities, many commented that their disability had prevented them from getting the type of job they would like to have as well as engaging in activities outside of the workplace and in the community.

Participants were asked about nine different community activities and their level of participation. Answers from the individuals with disabilities were somewhat lower than from the participants who were not disabled. Comparing both groups, 100% of each group reported that they shopped in their community. Individuals with mild to moderate levels of MR or the proxies answering for them, indicated that their shopping trips sometimes included guidance from school officials and/ or parents or other relatives. Participants who, based on interview dialogue, had low average to borderline cognitive abilities including some of those in the LD and MR, reported engaging in community activities that were normally not supervised by parents or other supervision. Two of the participants with MR had been involved in the 1998 Special Olympics but did not do this on a regular basis.

Some participants in the study reportedly had police records. Most were isolated events and were classified as Misdemeanors. According to this study, there were just as many individuals without disabilities with a police record as there were those with disabilities. However, some of both groups spent time in jail for various offenses. Time in jail reported by participants was widely variable, from 1 hour to 72 hours and more. Comparing individuals with and without disabilities who spent any amount of time in jail reveals that more individuals without disabilities spent time in jail than those with disabilities. Reasons for this are nonconclusive at this point. For one, not knowing exactly how much time each participant spent in jail makes it difficult to make inferences or judgements about the situation. However, an inference, based on a comment from one of the participants, might be that some community members or members of society do not understand the extent of a disability. They

may be cautious about rendering consequences to those who are considered within the special education program. In fact, researchers in the past (Harris & Associates, 1998; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997) have indicated that a primary area of discrimination among society is that of not allowing individuals with disabilities to take enough responsibility for themselves. In addition, it is viewed as discriminatory when the person with the disability is not expected to contend with consequences for his or her own behaviors and actions. These are forms of discrimination that happen in the community as well as on the job.

Because of the knowledge supporting a multitude of emotional and mental problems among those with disabilities, data on attendance at community self-help groups were included in this research. According to Kircus and Brillhart (1990) many persons with disabilities have a hidden disability; e.g., substance abuse involving alcohol and/or psychotropic drugs. Substance abuse has a negative impact on a person's vocation, academic performance, family life, and social life, as well as on physical health.

Alcoholism often arises from the person with disabilities' need to distort an unpleasant reality (Vash, 1981). Rasmussen and DeBoer (1980-81) conducted a study in a vocational rehabilitation facility and found that 60% of the 273 clients had alcohol-related problems and 30% of the subjects of the study were classified as alcoholics.

Within this study, aspects of the social capabilities and activities among the individuals with and without disabilities were examined by means of involvement in community self-help groups such as 12-step programs, i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous

(AA), Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), or Battered Women's Shelters. Results indicate that there were similar percentages of involvement from both groups of individuals. Most participants reported non attendance at any type of 12-step support groups. However, according to responses from proxies and the participants personally, of those who do attend, many are forced to do so because of offenses involving drugs and/or alcohol. The motivating factor behind attending A.A meetings or N.A. meetings was because of being court ordered to do so. According to the Department of Public Safety in Oklahoma, when an individual driving in Oklahoma receives a DUI (Driving Under the Influence), one of the requirements for rehabilitation is court-appointed mandatory attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. The mandatory number of times the participant had to attend remained confidential.

The individuals who were classified as ED reported attending on a regular basis. Two of these stated that they attend A.A. regularly and one reported attending N.A on a regular basis. Among the group of respondents who were Orthopedically Impaired, they reported attending Alanon support groups and also support groups for depression. Individuals in other categories such as OHI, LD, and MR stated that they have attended some type of 12-step support meeting before, but do not go on a regular basis. Those in the HI category reported attendance at Alanon and depression support groups often.

A small percentage of the participants with disabilities reported that they attend meetings (5%), while fifteen percent of the individuals who are not disabled reported attending meetings. This question yielded two responses; one was from those

who had only attended one or two meetings and knew of the recovery programs. The second response was from those who attended 12-step recovery programs on a regular basis. For all individuals, however, the term ' regular' holds varying meanings.

Community involvement was again examined for aspects of social functioning and yielded answers that were comparable to all other social variables examined. When asked about involvement in Boy Scouts of America (BSA) or Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS) programs, there were more students without disabilities (51%) who reportedly took part in the programs than did those with disabilities (40%). Among the differing categories of disabilities there were almost one-half of the participants in each category that reported taking an active part in BSA or BBBS programs. The exception to this is among those individuals with orthopedic impairments with only four out of 14 of these individuals being members of BSA or BBBS. Students stated that because the majority of the camps in central Oklahoma being only minimally 'handicapped accessible', the numbers of individuals in a wheel chair is below that of other disability groups who join BSA. In conversation with a spokesperson from the Washita Council Division of the BSA, confirmation was made that many of the Boy Scout camps in Garvin and Cleveland Counties do not have adequate facilities to serve a person with multiple orthopedic disabilities, but that programs for emotional disorders were often facilitated from BSA counselors and den mothers. In essence, among those individuals with ED, almost half of these individuals reported that they belonged to BSA. Two of the boys report that they continue to be a member of the BSA by attending weekly meetings and going on yearly campouts with the unit. Also stated was that by being a part of the BSA, these individuals have learned better

compensation skills for getting along with people and working with adults. Again, according to spokespeople of the BSA, the organization has excellent programs that support, facilitate, and enhance the learning process for boys and young adult males with mental disorders. These facilities are located throughout southcentral and eastern Oklahoma.

In a culture that continues to become increasingly complex, there is little need to make a plea for any type of research that will increase the ability and inner motivation for individuals with mild and moderate disabilities to successfully acquire employment once they leave the high school classroom. Self determination is an area of relative newness, yet highly regarded in the special education field as critical to the success of students with disabilities.

When identifying self-determining factors and behaviors, nearly one-half of all students on an IEP in high school reported that they could and did make decisions on their own. They indicated that they had been invited to school meetings and they believed that having meetings include them were positives in their programs. The individuals with disabilities who did not attend their meetings were those in the MR and ED category. While it is unclear why the two categories of individuals did not attend meetings at school, answers from these participants indicated a somewhat positive outlook for their future.

Aspects of self determination were examined in this study in regard to the economic background and lifestyle of those participants with disabilities. As stated in previous studies (Harris & Associates, 1998; NLTS, 1993) people with disabilities are more likely to live in rural areas and also more likely to live in very low-income

households with less than $15,000 in annual income. With economic situations such as described, it would appear that individuals in this situation would want to improve their lifestyle. However, it is possible for individuals who are disabled to feel defeated and withdraw from the work world entirely, thus not attempt to find employment early on (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997). Johnston and Murray Counties rank as among the poorest counties in Oklahoma in regards to child poverty rates, per capita personal income, percent of children on welfare, and unemployment rates. Taken together, these factors provide a comprehensive picture of the county's economic status. Children in Oklahoma's poorest counties are more than twice as likely to be poor, and almost three times as likely to be on welfare as children in the state's wealthiest counties (Factbook, 1998). Next to the poorest ranked counties are Garvin and Pottawatomie which rank as poor among the other counties. Among the wealthiest counties in the study are McClain and Cleveland, while Oklahoma County is ranked as middle ground.

Limitations

The limitations of survey research were briefly discussed in Chapter III. There are numerous limitations in this study worthy of note. First, while there was a control group of participants who were not in any special education programs in high school, hence, nondisabled, the size of this group was limited and small in number as compared to the group with disabilities. This is a factor that affects the generalization of the study, even though, the ideal situation is to have a sample of participants without disabilities who are graduating at the same time so that interviews can be

conducted. Within this interview framework, participants can be matched for socioeconomic standing, age, and other job related information.

The second major limitation relates to the sample and its composition, which is weighted more heavily to the mild to moderate range of cognitive deficits, particularly LD. Therefore, generalizations to individuals with other disabilities must be done with caution. Also, the sample contains individuals who were at home or their parents were willing to respond. There is no way to determine how well this sample is representative of a wider population.

A third major limitation of the present study is the fact that the program model implemented in IDEA stating the new regulations about attendance at IEP meetings is relatively new to schools and districts. Because of the newness, procedures may not be completely relevant to some of the participants in the study.

Fourth, the results must be viewed within the context of the characteristics of a telephone survey. While the descriptive survey is the most frequently used method of educational research (Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988), response effect, or the tendency of the respondent to give misleading or inaccurate information is problematic (Borg & Gall, 1989). The use of more than one source in gathering information is frequently used to counteract this problem (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Fifth, using proxy's to answer questions for the absent respondent is another limitation. There are advantages and disadvantages to the use of parents, spouses, employers, or other significant others of respondents. Whereas the person with the disability is most often the focus of concern and would therefore be most likely to "know" where he or she resides, whether or not he or she is employed, and so forth,

difficulties are often associated with interviewing individuals with disabilities because they are often more difficult to contact than their parents (Levine & Edgar, 1994).

A follow-up study conducted by Bullis, Bull, Johnson, and Peters (1994) addresses the agreement question within the perspective of the communication issues unique to that population. Bullis et al. concluded that mixing parent and subject responses into an "integrated" data set may result in misrepresented data. On the other hand, Levine and Edgar concluded in their 1994 study that mixing informants for answers to questions about postgraduates, such as employment status and place of residence, does not seem to be a problem. No real conclusion can be drawn on the misrepresentation of such data within the methodology chosen for this follow-up study.

Sixth, the survey was conducted in only one state. Although, a response rate of 28% was obtained, more than half of the potential respondents are not represented in this study. However, the respondents were a meager 28% of the whole population not of a sample. Therefore, generalization beyond this community is not recommended.

The seventh limitation involves design problems. A closer examination of the lives of graduates would improve the data. Although several interviews were conducted concerning each individual at length, an ethnographic approach would lend itself to a broader picture of the community members. Additionally, a longitudinal design would be better suited to follow up research, particularly when the data demonstrate improvement trends. This research would provide an excellent baseline

for continued follow up. The fact that the tendency of participants to be more employable over time suggests that this research may have been conducted too soon after high school graduation to get valid results on some of the participants.

The eighth and final limitation involves the lack of reliable class and primary disability data generated from the participants themselves or from the person responsible for giving the information to the researcher. Although excellent responses were given and most of the participants who were called were more than cooperative, the lack of knowledge of the actual school records were a major limitation.

Implications for Future Research

Statewide studies in California, Vermont, Colorado, and Texas focused educators on the plight of special education students outside of the school setting (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985. Edgar (1985) posed the question, "Did the special education programs influence their opportunity to have an improved quality of life" (p.470) ? It is typical that research generates more questions than it answers (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990). The statements about the reported findings can only be followed with questions about what prompted these findings. The primary question that this research posed-How does secondary special education impact the lives of adult persons with disabilities?- has yet to be answered. Still to be identified are the key components of adequate secondary programs in compliance with governmental regulations set forth in IDEA. For example, do school-to-work programs, work-study, and more involvement in the transition process actually benefit graduates of special education programs?

Apparently, there is still much to be done in Oklahoma and most likely, within many other states, to make persons with disabilities more competitive in employment. There are questions that still need answers. First, will there be jobs available for these students once they have exited their school program? The rise in computer technological training necessary for even entry-level jobs is on a steady increase. Fast food, hospitality, and/or service-oriented businesses are currently looking to populations that have not previously had training in that field.

Secondly, will the students with learning disabilities have the job skills necessary to be successful at a job? The current employment trend demands that this question be addressed specifically. No matter how confident educators are that they are teaching what employers want in applicants, the unemployment and underemployment figures for this population indicate differently.

In conjunction with the second major question above, are three other related questions. First, what specific skills do employers view as critical for employees to possess in order to be successful on the job? Secondly, are those specific skills being addressed in the educational programs of students who are learning disabled?

The drive to provide opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities to successful work in the community has met with success, but also with some degree of failure. Results of recent investigations have documented the benefits of vocational training, inclusive environments in high school, and the supported employment models (Rusch, 1990; Halpern, 1992; Deschler, Ellis & Lenz, 1996; Tompkins, 1996; Wagner, 1989). However, despite accounts of successful programs, long term job

retention continues to be a concern (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1991; Deshler, 1978; Clement-Heist, Seigel, & Gaylord-Ross, 1992; Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985).

According to this study, there is also much to be accomplished in the areas of total life enjoyment and social aspects of living as well as employment for the person who has disabilities. It is strongly suggested that future research delve further into the lives of individuals with disabilities, particularly the female sector. This study indicated an advanced number of women in the work world. More research of a longitudinal nature is necessary to follow up on situations such as this to identify areas of strengths and also weaknesses.

The lack of effectiveness of secondary training was also demonstrated by the percentage of employed persons at the time of the study. It would behoove the legislatures to take a closer look at what types of programs are available and which ones are working. Ideally, the employment situation should rise when successful training programs are implemented within a school district. While Oklahoma has policies formed wherein their primary purpose is to create successful individuals, these policies need to be further investigated.

Another important area for future research involves how adults with disabilities develop through life phases, stages, and transitions. The limited data in this study suggest that they are delayed in their progression. Studies in this area could help educators and service providers in meeting the needs of individuals who are unaware of the problems and situations of being disabled.

There is also the area of research that must delve into and examine the many twists and turns by which a person passes in terms of alcohol and drug addiction

among individuals with disabilities. Literature also states that another facet to the problem is that many of these individuals are dually diagnosed as learning disabled and also alcoholic/addicts. In other literature, data show that people with disabilities are at much higher risk than the rest of the population for substance abuse. In 1997 statistics showing that of 248,679 clients served by licensed substance abuse facilities in New York State, 55,719 (22.4 percent) were reported to the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services as having a coexisting physical or mental disability. Of those clients with disabilities, approximately 40% percent suffer from disabilities such as learning disabilities and/or attention problems (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services [SAMHSA], 1999).

In the last two decades, much has been written about the problems encountered by people with disabilities who are entering society. Frequent problems cited with this endeavor include barriers involving architecture, education, and vocation. Kinney and Leaton (1986) estimated that 77% of American men and 60% of American women drink alcohol. Using these statistics as baseline data, subsequent studies indicate the higher prevalence of alcohol and drug use with persons with disabilities. The multi-disabled person, who was an alcoholic as well as having other physical or learning disabilities, was identified as an emerging problem (Hindman & Widem, 1980).

It is obvious that efforts must be made in Oklahoma in order to facilitate individuals with disabilities in living and working with some independence. While many of the participants enjoyed some freedom, there were still areas of their life that

were extremely dependent on other individuals. Questions remain regarding the public school responsibilities compared with those of parental responsibilities.

Although this research probed what specific social and recreational activities the participants were involved in and whether they had some sense of self-determination, results were tentative. Limited activities and a high level of satisfaction were reported. The majority of participants reported getting to do what they wanted during their spare time. Other factors ensuring high self-determination were also rated positively. What creates the self determination within these individuals but also continues to keep the individual behind? Additional research is warranted in this area.

How much influence do parental attitudes and preferences have over the living, working, and community accessing of individuals with disabilities? Many of the parents in the survey process indicated that the reasons they wanted their son/daughter to return home to live was in order to continue to go to school or to a post-secondary training school. In this way, they would better themselves and also raise their skill levels, hence raise their earning power. Further study in this area is also recommended.

Some individuals in the study indicated involvement with self-help twelve step programs for drug and alcohol abuse. Is there a correlation between individuals with disabilities and the incidence of drug addiction? Within the last twenty years studies have been conducted that indicate a correlation between addictions and being disabled (Hindman & Widem, 1980; Kircus & Brillhart, 1990;Vash, 1981). However, continued research in this area is critical to the survival of the individuals

with disabilities and their efforts to work and live in today's society. Other concerns within this area of research would be implications of parental involvement in alcohol and drug use and the effects of hereditary factors that may or may not contribute to a predisposition to alcohol and/or drug abuse. As well, another unanswered question that arises among young adults with drug/alcohol problems is whether unemployment is a product of alcohol abuse or the cause? Questions such as these need further research in order to be looked at realistically and hopefully, minimized.

Summary

When breaking down the results by special needs category, several unexpected results appear. While many of the students with exceptionalities are experiencing more freedom to be mobile within the community in which they live, there are still a high percentage of these students living at home or with relatives. Rates of individuals remaining in their hometown were comparable to each other among those who did receive special education services during high school but not as compared to those who did not receive any type of special education services. In addition, data supported theories that while females are becoming more mobile and independent, they continue to be less mobile than males.

There were a number of parents, both mothers and fathers, who reported the information for their sons or daughters. No in-law parents were used in the information collecting stage of this study. Because many of the parents were eager and openly willing to discuss their children's' marriage relationship and/or co-habitation relationship, this would be valuable information for a further study as a qualitative measure to understand feelings and emotional levels of the parents of the

adolescents who marry at a young age, become independent and on their own, and then to return to the parents' home for financial help.

Employment statistics that emerged from this study are consistent with other previously conducted follow up studies. As were the conclusions from prior studies, employment continues to be the area with the widest gulf between people with disabilities of any nature and the rest of the population. This summarization is reported in studies conducted by Haring, Lovett, and Smith (1990) and again by Harris and Associates, Incorporated in 1998. While results are not as positive as wanted by educators, changes in IDEA appear to be propelling attitude uplifts and more freedom for individuals leaving high school. Becoming an integral component of the educational process by attending IEP meetings seems to be helping to eliminate a few of the problems that once existed. However, while changes are in progress, these data continue to support data derived from earlier studies that were conducted before IDEA and also before Public Law 94-142 mandates came into effect.

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Appendix A

Oklahoma Department of Health and Human Services

AFDC-Unemployed Parents (AFDC-UP)- provides a monthly check via mail to be used for shelter, food, clothing, transportation, utilities, basic drugs, personal items and household equipment. Applications are available in DHS offices located in every county.

Aid to Families and Dependent Children- AFDC provides a monthly check, via mail, to be used for shelter, food, clothing, transportation, utilities, basic drugs, personal items and household equipment.

Child Day Care Services- Day Care provides a subsidy payment to licensed and contracted day care homes and centers and to approved in-home caretakers who provide care for approved children.

Children with Special Health Care Needs- The CSHCN program is part of the Maternal and Child Health (Title V) Block Grant. These programs are funded to provide a variety of services to children who meet the definition of special health care. Additionally, CSHCN funds local efforts which are targeted to provide community-based, client centered services.

Commodity Distribution- This program provides United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Donated Commodities to the Child Nutrition Programs operated in the State of Oklahoma. These programs include the National School Lunch Program, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program and the Summer Food Services Program. The programs were enacted through federal legislation to improve the nutritional quality and quantity of the diets of the many participants in the various

food distribution programs.

Education , Training & Employment Program- The purpose of the Education, Training and Employment (ET& E) program is to ensure needy families with children obtain the education, training and employment that will help avoid long term welfare dependence. (Nationally this program is called the JOBS Program-Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program.

Employment Services-Sheltered Workshop- Sheltered workshops provide training in vocational skills for persons with developmental disabilities. These individuals are also provided paid work opportunities via subcontracts entered into by the workshops and private industry.

Family Support- Provides a cash subsidy of approximately $250.00 per month to families raising a child with developmental disabilities in the natural home. These payments are intended to offset the extraordinary costs associated with raising a child with disabilities and prevent the need for out of home placements.

Food Stamp Program- A supplemental entitlement program administered in Oklahoma by DHS to utilize the nation's food abundance to raise the nutritional levels and improve the general health of the nation's low income households.

Low Income Home Energy Asst. Program (LIHEAP)- A needs based program which pays part of the home heating costs for eligible households. Applications are available in DHS offices in every county beginning early December for approximately two weeks. A large number of public assistance households are pre-authorized each year. Most payments are made to energy vendors. Crisis assistance is available in the two-week application period in December and one week in March. Weatherization

assistance is available statewide through various community agencies.

State Supplemental Payment (SSP)- SSP provides cash assistance in the form of a monthly check to provide for basic needs. Although totally state funded, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have rules regarding the amount of funds which must be expended.

Supplemental Security Income-DCP- Purchases a variety of services including: medical and dental care, medications, therapeutic appliances and equipment, speech and hearing services, special therapeutics, nutritional services, transportation, and education/developmental aids.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)- Provides temporary cash assistance for families with children deprived of support while providing services to assist families move from cash assistance to self-sufficiency. The TANF Program replaces AFDC, AFDC,UP and JOBS Program.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf- The Oklahoma School for the Deaf provides comprehensive services to hearing impaired children age 3-21 in a residential setting. The majority of students: (1) have other disabilities, i.e. mental retardation, limited visual acuity, learning disabilities, etc., requiring a low staff to student ratio; and (2) come from primarily rural areas. The main program is located in Sulphur with four regional pre-schools. Services provided include early childhood development programs, elementary and secondary academic training, vocational training, recreational/leisure time management, student development through residential programming, speech and auditory training, transitional living services and support services. In addition, the school serves as a legislatively-mandated statewide resource

in the assessment of deaf students.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services- Rehabilitation Services is primarily a program for persons with disabilities of working age. The purpose of the program is to assist persons with disabilities to become employable or the participate in home or community activities. Eligibility for services is based upon documentation of a physical or mental disability that constitutes a vocational handicap for the individual. The services include, but are not limited to: transportation, interpreter services for the deaf, reader services for the blind, counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, physical restoration services, occupational licenses, tools, equipment, post-employment services, and other goods and services that would benefit the individual in terms of employability.

Appendix B

ARTICLE XIV: VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Section 292. State Board of Vocational Technical Education.

There is hereby created the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education which shall succeed to all of the powers and duties heretofore invested in the State Board for Vocational Education. The membership of the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall consist of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the six (6) appointed members of the State Board of Education as ex officio voting members, plus six (6) members to be appointed by the Governor, five (5) of whom shall be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor shall appoint one such appointive member from each of the six (6) congressional districts. All appointments made by the Governor shall be initially as follows: One for a term of one (1) year, one for a term of two (2) years, one for a term of three (3) years, one for a term of four (4) years, one for a term of five (5) years, and one for a term of six (6) years. Thereafter all such members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed for a term of six (6) years. All such terms shall expire on the first day of April of the year in which the term of each member expires. The Chairman of the Board shall be the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Director of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education shall serve as an ex officio nonvoting member and shall be the executive officer of said Board.

The State Board of Vocational Technical Education shall meet in regular session once each month. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or by a majority of the members of the Board. Seven (7) members of said Board shall

constitute a quorum. No business may be transacted at any meeting unless a quorum is present, and every act of the Board shall be approved by a majority of the membership of said Board. Each member of the Board shall receive necessary traveling expenses, while in the performance of his duties pursuant to the State Reimbursement Act. (70-14-102)

Section 294. Powers and Duties.

The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall have the following power and duties:

1. Have the supervision of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education, which department shall keep its principal offices at Stillwater, and appoint and fix the compensation and duties of the Director and other personnel of such Department.

(8) Have the supervision of the vocational and technical schools and colleges of Oklahoma, except Oklahoma State University of Technical Training at Okmulgee and the Oklahoma State University Technical Institutes at Oklahoma City and Stillwater, which, however, shall be eligible to participate in federal programs administered by the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education.

(8) Cooperate with, and enter into agreements with, and administer programs of, and receive federal funds from, the United States Department of Education and other federal agencies in matters relating to vocational and technical education, youth apprenticeship programs, and manpower training, and be

the sole state agency for such purposes. Provided that, programs and funds made available through the Job Training Partnership Act, or its successor programs, shall be excluded.

(8) Provide for the formulation and adoption of curricula, courses of study, and other instructional aids necessary for the adequate instruction of students in the vocational and technical schools and colleges of this state. It is the intent of the Legislature that instructional models for vocational students should include higher standards of academic work with increased emphasis on communication, computation and applied science.

(8) Develop a plan to provide adequate vocational offerings accessible to all students having the ability to benefit.

(8) Enter into such agreements and contracts with the State Board of Education, boards of trustees of community junior colleges, boards of education of independent and elementary school districts, boards of education of area school districts for vocational and/or technical schools, private educational or training institutions, public or private industry, and boards of directors of community action programs, as may be necessary or feasible for the furtherance of vocational and technical training within this state.

(8) Cooperate and enter into agreements with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

8. Cooperate with the State Department of Education in developing hands-on career exploration activities for students in grades 6 through 10, integrating academic competencies into vocational instruction, and ensuring counseling

of all students in order to minimize the number of students graduating from high school without having completed either a vocational-technical program or college preparation.

(8) Cooperate whenever possible, to avoid any duplication of training programs with any established training program registered by the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, United States Department of Labor. (70-14-103)

Section 295. Dropout Recovery Program Grants.

(8) The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall provide or contract for technical assistance from appropriated funds. The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall provide or contract for in-depth program analysis and evaluation of grant-funded programs to the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education and the. Legislature no later than November 1 following the end of the school year in which one or more programs were implemented and funded through Dropout Recovery Grants.

B. By September 1, 1995, the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall prepare and submit to the Legislature and the Governor a proposed statewide plan, including a statement of needed funding, for the provision of vocational and technical education to students in grades six through twelve who have been identified by school districts in their needs assessments as being at risk of not completing a high school education for a reason other than that identified in Section 13-101 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and who would benefit from vocational

and technical education. The plan shall include the availability of technology education courses to the identified students, an outreach effort to students in grades eleven and twelve in vocational and technical courses, provision for cooperative agreements to provide services for students participating in alternative education programs, and coordination with the State Board of Education. (70-14-103.1)

Section 295.1. Promulgation of Rules for Access to Services.

The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall promulgate rules to ensure access to vocational offerings in area vocational-technical school districts to students in vocational-technical school districts who are receiving educational services from a school district due to placements outlined in the provisions of Section 1-113 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. (70-14-103.2)

Section 295.2. Pilot Programs for Rural Businesses.

Subject to the availability of fund appropriated specifically for this purpose, the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education shall implement a pilot program at area vocational-technical schools, the purpose of which is to provide services and training to help rural businesses expand. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide tuition grants and offer economic development, marketing and technology access services to qualifying rural businesses and communities as determined by the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education. (70-14-103.3)

Section 296. State Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

(8) There is hereby created the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education, which shall consist of such divisions, units and

positions as may be established by the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education. The Department shall be under the control of the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education, which shall formulate policies and adopt rules and regulations for the administration and operation of the Department.

B. The official name of the state agency which is known as "State Department of Vocational and Technical Education: shall be designated in all future references as the "Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education". Any references in the statutes to the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education shall be deemed references to the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education.(70-14-104)

Section 297. Courses of Instruction and Training - State Vocational - Technical Fund.

The State Department of Vocational and Technical Education may operate and maintain, or otherwise provide for, courses of instruction and training in vocational and technical education courses and subjects, and charge students reasonable tuition fees for instruction or training. The fees shall be deposited in a special fund, which is hereby created, to be known as the State Vocational-Technical Fund. The fund may be used to pay expenses incurred by the Department in operating and maintaining the classes, and payment therefrom may be upon vouchers signed by a person or persons designated by the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education. The fund may also be used for the operation of the Multi-state Academic and Vocational Curriculum Consortium (MA VCC) for the purpose of developing and disseminating curriculum materials for the member states. (70-14-105)

Section 310: Youth Apprentice Program Guidelines

A. The Oklahoma Legislature, recognizing the need for improved methods of helping secondary students make a smooth transition from high school to the workplace, hereby establishes guidelines for youth apprenticeship programs.

B. Youth apprenticeship programs shall be defined as learning programs for young people enrolled in vocational education the combine on-the- job training with classroom instruction, that offer a bridge between secondary and post high school training and education, and that result in certification of mastery of work skills.

C. Youth apprenticeship programs shall be administered and supervised by the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education, which shall also establish standards for program operation.

D. Not withstanding any other section of law, youth apprenticeship programs shall not mean any traditional apprenticeship program registered by the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, United States Department of Labor. (70-14-127)

Appendix C

Briefing Paper: Individualized Education Programs

Individualized Education Program- This document is a verbatim reprinting of:

- the Federal regulations concerning Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, and
- Notice of Interpretation, issued by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, to provide additional clarification of the Federal regulations.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997, P.L. 105-17, is the federal law that ensures a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for eligible children and youth with disabilities. This law is the latest of several amendments to P.L. 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), and is used by school systems around the country to guide the way in which special education and related services are determined for and provided to eligible children and youth with disabilities.

Passed in 1975, the EHA required that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) be developed by a team for each child or youth with a disability who was eligible for special education and related services. Among other things, the IEP was intended to set forth the services that would be provided to the child. In 1981, in response to queries from the public regarding the EHA's requirements for the IEP, the U.S. Department of Education released Appendix C to Part 300: Notice of Interpretation, which provided additional explanation of EHA's regulations.

The IDEA amended the EHA in 1990. In June 1997, the law was amended again by the IDEA Amendments of 1997. Regulations for IDEA '97 were published in the Federal Register on March 12, 1999.

Section 300.347(a)(1) requires that each IEP include:

A statement of the child's present levels of educational performance, including—(i) how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum; or (ii) for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities..."

Further, § 300.347(a)(7) sets forth new requirements for regularly informing parents about their child's educational progress, as regularly as parents of nondisabled children are informed of their child's progress. That section requires that the IEP include:

> A statement of—(i) How the child's progress toward the annual goals.. .will be measured; and (ii) how the child's parents will be regularly informed (by such means as periodic report cards), at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled children's progress, of—(A) their child's progress toward the annual goals; and (B) the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

One method that public agencies could use in meeting this requirement would be to provide periodic report cards to the parents of students with disabilities that include both (1) the grading information provided for all children in the agency at the same intervals; and (2) the specific information required by §300.347(a) (7)(ii)(A) and (B).

Preparing Students With Disabilities for Employment and Other Post-School Experiences

One of the primary purposes of the IDEA is to . .ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living ... (~ 300.1(a)). Section 701 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 describes the philosophy of independent living as including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society. Because many students receiving services under IDEA will also receive services under the Rehabilitation Act, it is important, in planning for their future, to consider the impact of both statutes.

Similarly, one of the key purposes of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 was to "promote improved educational results for children with disabilities through early intervention, preschool, and educational experiences that prepare them for later educational challenges and employment."
(H. Rep. No. 105-95, p. 82 (1997); S. Rep. No. 105-17, p. 4 (1997)).

Thus, throughout their preschool, elementary, and secondary education, the IEP's for children with disabilities must, to the extent appropriate for each individual child, focus on providing instruction and experiences that enable the child to prepare himself or herself for later educational experiences and for post-school activities,

including formal education, if appropriate, employment, and independent living. Many students with disabilities will obtain services through state vocational rehabilitation programs to ensure that their educational goals are effectively implemented in post-school activities. Services available through rehabilitation programs are consistent with the underlying purpose of IDEA.

Although preparation for adult life is a key component of FAPE throughout the educational experiences of students with disabilities, Part B sets forth specific requirements related to transition planning and transition services that must be implemented no later than ages 14 and 16, respectively, and which require an intensified focus on that preparation as these students begin and prepare to complete their secondary education.

II. Requirements that the IEP include "a statement of...transition service needs" beginning at age 14 (~ 300.347(b)(I)(i))," and a statement of needed transition services" no later than age 16 (~ 300.347(b)(2):

Section 300.347(b)(1) requires that, beginning no later than age 14, each student's IEP include specific transition-related content, and, beginning no later than age 16, a statement of needed transition services:

Beginning at age 14 and younger if appropriate, and updated annually, each student's IEP must include: '..a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program)" (300.347(b) (1)(i)).

Beginning at age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team),

each student's IEP must include: a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages." (~ 300.347 (b)(2)).

The Committee Reports on the IDEA Amendments of 1997 make clear that the requirement added to the statute in 1997 that beginning at age 14, and updated annually, the IEP include "a statement of the transition service needs" is designed to augment, and not replace," the separate, preexisting requirement that the IEP include, "..beginning at age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), a statement of needed transition services..." (H. Rep. No. 105-95, p. 102 (1997); S. Rep. No. 105-17, p. 22 (1997)). As clarified by the Reports, "The purpose of this requirement in § 300.347(b)(1)(i)] is to focus attention on how the child's educational program can be planned to help the child make a successful transition to his or her goals for life after secondary school." (H. Rep. No. 105-95. pP. 101-102 (1997); S. Rep. No. 105-17, p. 22 (1997)). The Reports further explain that "[F]or example, for a child whose transition goal is a job, a transition service could be teaching the child how to get to the job site on public transportation." (H. Rep. No. 105-95, p. 102 (1997); S. Rep. No. 105-17, p. 22 (1997)).

Thus, beginning at age 14, the IEP team, in determining appropriate measurable annual goals (including benchmarks or short-term objectives) and services for a student, must determine what instruction and educational experiences will assist the student to prepare for transition from secondary education to post-secondary life.

The statement of transition service needs should relate directly to the student's

goals beyond secondary education, and show how planned studies are linked to these goals. For example, a student interested in exploring a career in computer science may have a statement of transition services needs connected to technology course work, while another student's statement of transition services needs could describe why public bus transportation training is important for future independence in the community.

Although the focus of the transition planning process may shift as the student approaches graduation, the IEP team must discuss specific areas beginning at least at the age of 14 years and review these areas annually. As noted in the Committee Reports, a disproportionate number of students with disabilities drop out of school before they complete their secondary education: "Too many students with disabilities are failing courses and dropping out of school. Almost twice as many students with disabilities drop out as compared to students without disabilities." (H. Rep. No. 105-95, p. 85 (1997), S. Rep. No. 105-17, p. 5 (1997).)

To help reduce the number of students with disabilities that drop out, it is important that the IEP team work with each student with a disability and the student's family to select courses of study that will be meaningful to the student's future and motivate the student to complete his or her education.

This requirement is distinct from the requirement, at § 300.347(b)(2), that the IEP include: beginning at age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), a statement of needed transition services for the child, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.

The term "transition services" is defined at § 300.29 to a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that—(1) Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (2) Is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and (3) Includes—(i) Instruction; (ii) Related services; (iii) Community experiences; (iv) The development of employment and other post- school adult living objectives; and (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation."

Thus, while § 300.347(b) (1) requires that the IEP team begin by age 14 to address the student's need for instruction that will assist the student to prepare for transition, the IEP must include by age 16 a statement of needed transition services under §300.347(b)(2) that includes a "coordinated set of activities..., designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities...." (300.29) Section 300.344(b)(3) further requires that, in implementing § 300.347(b)(1), public agencies (in addition to required participants for all IEP meetings), must also invite a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. Thus, § 300.347(b)(2) requires a broader focus on coordination of services across, and linkages between, agencies beyond the SEA and LEA.

Section 300.347(b)(2) requires that the IEP for each child with a disability, beginning no later than age 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team,

include all "needed transition services," as identified by the IEP team and consistent with the definition at § 300.29, regardless of whether the public agency or some other agency will provide those services. Section 300.347(b)(2) specifically requires that the statement of needed transition services include, '. .if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages."

The need to include, as part of a student's IEP, transition services to be provided by agencies other than the public agency is contemplated by § 300.348(a), which specifies what the public agency must do if another agency participating in the development of the statement of needed transition services fails to provide a needed transition service that it had agreed to provide.

Nothing in [Part B] relieves any participating agency, including a State vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency."

However, the fact that an agency other than the public agency does not fulfill its responsibility does not relieve the public agency of its responsibility to ensure that FAPE is available to each student with a disability. (Section 300.142(b) (2) specifically requires that if an agency other than the LEA fails to provide or pay for a special education or related service (which could include a transition service), the LEA must, without delay, provide or pay for the service, and may then claim reimbursement from the agency that failed to provide or pay for the service.)

Section 300.344 requires that, "In implementing the requirements of ~ 300.347(b) (1) (ii) requiring a statement of needed transition services], the public

agency shall also invite a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services." To meet this requirement, the public agency must identify all agencies that are "likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services" for each student addressed by § 300.347(b)(1), and must invite each of those agencies to the IEP meeting, and if an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the public agency must take other steps to obtain the participation of that agency in the planning of any transition services.

Appendix D

Code of Federal Regulations 34:Part 300-301:

Least Restrictive Environment. This definition is taken solely from the Code of Federal Regulations 34 Parts 300 and 3O1 Assistance to States for the Education of children with Disabilities Programs and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities; Final Rule.

Section 300. 17 *(1)* instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings:

Section 300.132 Least Restrictive Environment.

Each State plan must include procedures that ensure that the requirements of Sections 300.550-300.556 are met.

Least Restrictive Environment

Section 300:550 General

Each SEA shall ensure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures that meet the requirements of Sections 300.550-300.556.

Each public agency shall ensure

That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled; and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Authority: 20

U.S.C. 1412(50(b); 141 4(A)(1)(c)(IV))

Section 300.551 Continuum of alternative placements.

Each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.The continuum required in paragraph (a) of this section must

-Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under section 300.17 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and

-Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B)).

Note: Section 300.553 is taken from a requirement in the final regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. With respect to this requirement, the analysis of the Section 504 Regulation includes the following statement: (This paragraph) specifies that handicapped children must also be provided nonacademic services in as integrated a setting as possible. This requirement is especially important for children whose educational needs necessitate their being solely with other handicapped children during most of each day.

Appendix E

Definitions of Non Profit Organizations

Alcoholics Anonymous- an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, nondenominational, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or educational requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

In the last few years, when juveniles or adults have been charged with alcohol related offenses such as DUI (Driving Under the Influence), DWI (Driving While Intoxicated), or Public Intoxication (PI), the courts have required these individuals to attend regular A.A. meetings. A.A. groups have welcomed many new members from court programs and treatment facilities. Some have come to A.A. voluntarily; others, under a degree of pressure. When attending an A.A meeting because of an appointment from a court, an employer, or any other agency, the group cannot discriminate against any prospective member.

Sometimes courts ask for proof of attendance at A.A. meetings. Some groups, with the consent of the prospective member, have the A.A. group secretary sign or initial a slip that has bee furnished by the court together with a self-addressed court envelope. The referred person supplies identification and mails the slip back to the court as proof of attendance.

Other groups cooperate with the court systems in other ways. There is no set procedure. The nature and extent of any group's involvement in this process is entirely up to the individual group.

Alanon Family Group- Alanon Family Group, often referred to as just Alanon, is a sister group of Alcoholics Anonymous in which the primary purpose of Alanon is to help family and friends who have been affected by someone else's drinking. There are no dues or fees. Alanon is a self-supporting, nonprofessional group for men and women who share a common problem of alcoholism in someone they love. Nightly meetings are usually, but attendance is voluntary.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America- the purpose of BBBS is to provide a caring attitude to help a child. Before being matched with a waiting child, the connecting agency who is helping with the collaboration gets permission from the parent or guardian. Being a 'Big' means listening to and learning from the children. Together, the volunteer adult and child enjoy playing sports, seeing movies, cooking, going over schoolwork, visiting museums, washing the car or just hanging out. Kids need an older role model, which is what BBBS provides on a nonprofit, self-supporting basis.

Boy Scouts of America- the purpose of BSA, incorporated on February 8, 1910, and chartered by Congress in 1916, is to provide an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop personal fitness.

Narcotics Anonymous- the primary purpose of the organization Narcotics Anonymous is to help those with addictions to narcotics get relief. NA is a spin-off 12-step recovery program which is based on the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Meetings are voluntary and to be a member, the only requirement is to want to stop using drugs.

Appendix F

A Follow Up Survey of High School Graduates

Demographic Information

1.Name of Participant (identify by numerical symbol only unless result data is requested)_____ Relationship to Participant_____
2.Age of participant_____
3.(1).....male (2).....female
4. Marital Status: Single(1)_____ Married____(2) Widowed (3)____
Divorced (4)_____ **Do you live in the same town that you graduated in?**
Yes_____(1) No_____ (2)
5. Number of children_____
6. Year of Graduation_____ **Age at Graduation**_____
7.What is the participant's primary disability when exiting high school? (Check only one)

____Disability data missing from records (1)
____Other Health Impaired(2)
____Learning Disability(3)
____Mental Retardation(4)
____Emotional Disturbance(5)
____Visual Impairment(6)
____Hearing Impairment(7)
____Orthopedic Impairment(8)
____Severe/Profound Handicap(9)
____Speech/Language Impairment(10)
____Deaf-Blind(11)
____Participant not enrolled in any type of special education program (12)

Section I: High School Programs

8.What was the participant's program model when exiting from high school? (Only One)

____Regular class(1)
____Resource teacher program(2)
____Special class(3)
____Special Day school(4)
____Residential School(5)
____Other(6) _____
____School-to-Work Program (7)

9.Which type of program did the participant have training in?

1.Agricultural Education
2.Business/Office Education
3.Health Occupation Education
4.Home Economics Education
5.Marketing Education
6.Trade and Industry
7.Beautician/Barber Education
8. Other
(8) Academic Track

10.Specially-Designed Vocational Training

1. Community-Based Placement (w/job coach/non-paid)
(8) Community-Based Placement (w/job coach and paid)
(8) Work Experience (non-paid)
4. Work Experience (paid and In community)
5. JTPA Summer youth
6. Placement in sheltered Workshop/work activity
7. Other _____
8. None _____

11.During which year did the student turn 14 years of age?

1._____Senior year
2._____Junior year
3._____Sophomore year
4_____Freshman year
5_____Grade 8

12. Did the student attend annual IEP meetings beginning at least by age 14?

1.____yes
(8) ____no
(8) ____Not on an IEP

13. Is there a statement of needed transition services included in the IEP for the student?

1.____yes
(8) ____no
3.____Does not apply

<u>If you answered yes to question #13, go to question #14. If you answered no, skip to question #15.</u>

14. What areas were addressed on the IEP? (check all that apply)

Instruction_____(1)
Related Services_____(2)
Community experiences____(3)
Development of post school employment objectives_____(4)
Development of other post school adult living objectives____(5)
Acquisition of daily living skills____(6)
Functional vocational evaluation_____(7)
Not applicable____(8)

15.Did the participant work during high school?

(1)____yes
(2) _____no

Section II: Employment

16. Whom has the participant talked with about job opportunities since leaving high school (check all that apply)?

High School Counselors_____(1)
Rehabilitation facility_____(2)
Family/Friends/_____ (3)
community college_____(4)
Job Training Partnership Act agencies (JTPA)_____(5)

17. Does the participant have a job now? How many jobs since high school?_____

____ no (1)
____yes(2)

18.How many hours worked per week?

(1)____37.5 + hours (full time)
(2)____21-37 hours per week
(3)____16-20 hours per week
(4)____less than 16 hours per week
(5)_____Unemployed

19. How long at this particular job?

_____ More than 6 months (1)
_____ Less than 6 months (2)
_____ Unemployed (3)

20. How much is earned per hour? _____Minimum wage (1)

_____More than minimum wage (2)
_____currently unemployed (3)

21. Have you ever been fired from a job? ____yes (1) ____no (2)

22. Reasons for leaving jobs: (all that apply)

(1)___fired (3)___quit
(2)___other (4)___quit for better job
(5)___couldn't do the work
(6)___trouble getting to work
(7)___did not get along with boss or co-workers
(8)___did not like job

23. If unemployed, why isn't the participant working? (check all that apply)

_____fired from last job (1)
_____unable to find work or laid off(2)
_____disabled and receiving SSI (3)
_____in mental health program (4)
_____homemaker (5)
_____full-time student(6)
_____job training program(7)
_____currently employed (8)

24. What types of benefits does the participant receive from the employer? (all that apply)

Sick leave_____(1)
Paid vacation_____(2)
Health insurance_____(3)
Life insurance_____(4)
Dental insurance_____(5)
Profit sharing_____(6)
Retirement_____(7)
Free meals_____(8)
Don't know_____(9)
None_____(0)
Employee discounts____(11)

25. Do you (or does the participant) arrive at work on time every day?

____I'm always late(1)
____I'm usually late(2)
____I'm sometimes late(3)
____I'm usually on time(4)
____I'm always on time(5)

26. How well do you get along w/other co-workers?

_____we always have problems (1)
_____we often have problems(2)
_____we sometimes have problems (3)
_____we usually get along(4)
_____we always get along(5)

Section III: Self -Determination

27. Do you think you helped make decisions about your future in high school IEP meetings?

____yes (1)
____no(2)
____I did not attend my IEP meetings in high school(3)
____not applicable to me (4)

28. Do you think that having transition programs earlier in your school career helped you with decisions about your future plans?

____yes (1)
____ no (2)
____ somewhat (3)
____does not apply to me (4)

29. Do you get to choose what you do in your free time, or does someone else choose for you?

____I always choose what I do (1)
____I sometimes choose what I do (2)
____Someone else sometimes chooses what I do (3)
____I never get to choose what I do (4)

Section IV: Social

30. Do you ever do things in the evenings or on weekends with friends or coworkers who do not have a disability? (If never, circle 0). (If yes....) **How often?**

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
rarely	sometimes	once in a while	often	very often

31. Is participant happy with his/her social life?

[ ] yes (1) [ ] no (2)

32. Does the participant have enough friends to visit and do things with?

[ ]yes (1) [ ]no(2)

33. How many friends does the participants see once a week?

(0)[ ] none
(1)[ ] one friend
(2)[ ] two friends
(3)[ ] more than two friends

34. Does the participant have a dating relationship?

[ ] girlfriend/boyfriend(1)
[ ] spouse(2)
[ ]roommate(3)
[ ] none (4)

35. What does the participant do for recreation? Check all that apply

(1)____ Hang out with friends
(2)____ Outdoor recreational sports (football, basketball, softball)
(3)____ Hunting/fishing
(4)____ Cooking/sewing (other domestic hobby)
(5)____ Movies
(6)____ Home videos
(7)____ Parties/taverns
(8)____ Indoor games (bowling, pool)

36. What does the participant do at home for leisure? Indicate top one or two choices

(1)_____watch television
(2)_____ listen to music
(3)_____ talk on the phone w/friends
(4)_____ visit w/family members
(5) _____sleep
(6) _____ Exercise (aerobics, weight-training)
(7) _____ gardening
(8)_____ water sports
(9)_____Other

37. What type of community involvement does the participant have? Choose all that apply

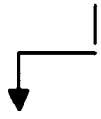
(1)_____shop
(2)_____movies
(3)_____work
(4)_____church
(5)_____friends
(6)_____eating out
(7)_____community sports
(8)_____community self-help groups (Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-anon, Overeaters Anonymous)
(9)_____other

38. What does the participant use for transportation?

(1)_____owns a vehicle
(2)_____depends on parents
(3)_____depends on friends for rides
(4)_____bicycle
(5)_____motorcycle
(6)_____walks
(7)_____city transportation (bus, cart)
(8)_____taxi

39. Has there ever been any involvement with the law?

(1)_____NO
(2)_____YES



40. Has there ever been time spent in jail?

___yes (1)
___no(2)

41. What has been the offense for jail time?

Narcotics related crimes_____(1)
Alcohol related crimes_____ (2)
Robbery _____(3)
Other_____ (4)
Not applicable_____ (5)

42. Does the participant/you attend a 12-step program?

(1).....yes
(2).....no

43. Which 12-step program do you attend regularly?

(1)___Alcoholics Anonymous
(2)___Al-Anon
(3)____Narcotics Anonymous
(4)____Overeaters Anonymous
(5)____Other.....Please specify _____-
(6)____not applicable

Section V: Living Arrangements

44. Where does the participant live?

(1)___relative
(2)___independent/alone
(3)___independent w/spouse

(4)___independent w/roommate
(5)___institution (prison)
(6)___co-habitation w/opposite sex person
(7)___parent

45. If participant lives with parent, why?

(1)____cannot afford to live alone
(2)____need help with everyday chores (money management, reading)
(3)____need a babysitter
(4)____afraid to be alone
(5)____I do not live with my parents

46.Where would parents <u>PREFER</u> the participant live?
(1)___with friends of the same sex
(2)____with boyfriend
(3)____with girlfriend
(4)____by themselves
(5)____supported living facility
(6)____other (please specify.....)

47.Are there problems the participant has encountered with independent living?
(1)_____not enough financial support
(2)_____lonely
(3)_____alcohol/drug problems
(4)_____No friends
(5)_____No help w/children
(6)_____No transportation to and from work
(7)_____Other, please
specify_____

48. Do the parents/caretakers fear loss of support for the participant such as SSI/ Medicaid, AFDC?
[ ]yes (1) [ ] no (2)

Thank You for your participation in this study. If you would like to have results of this study mailed to you, please give me your mailing address and I will send you a copy of the results when the study is completed.

Appendix G

Script to be used for survey consent via telephone:

Hello, my name is Mary Tomblin and I am conducting a study entitled, "A Follow-up Study of High School Graduates". I would like to speak with _____. This study is sponsored by Dr. Kathryn Haring with the primary investigator being myself, under the auspices of University of Oklahoma, Special Education Department. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. You are under no obligation to participate in this study and are free to withdraw at any time.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the quality of life beyond high school for students with and without disabilities. Were you identified as having a disability or on an IEP (Individualized Education Program) while in attendance at your high school or junior high school?

This study will identify aspects of the adult adjustment of high school students including those with mild and moderate disabilities from the classes of 1995 and 1998. The study will also identify various programs at high schools that are being implemented for students leaving high school and entering the world of work or post-secondary training.

Participation in this study is limited to the voluntary participation of youths 18 years and above in age . This study holds no foreseeable risks to participants in the study and participants may withdraw at any time. All records of the study will be kept confidential by using code numbers only on the questionnaires. The participant will not be named, the program location will not be identified and the names of participants will not appear in any reports, publications or presentations concerning this study.

Overall benefits of this research will be useful for institutions when making educational programming and policy decisions. It will also be helpful when identifying areas of future implications of vocational training contents for adolescents including those with disabilities and their ability to be competitive in the job market. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Mary Tomblin (405) 366-1872. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the Office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757.

Do you understand all that has been said and do you give verbal consent for your information to used in this study?

Appendix H

Oklahoma Child Count Data

From Sandy Garrett

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Oklahoma State Department of Education

May 1999

Child Count of Special Education Students by County

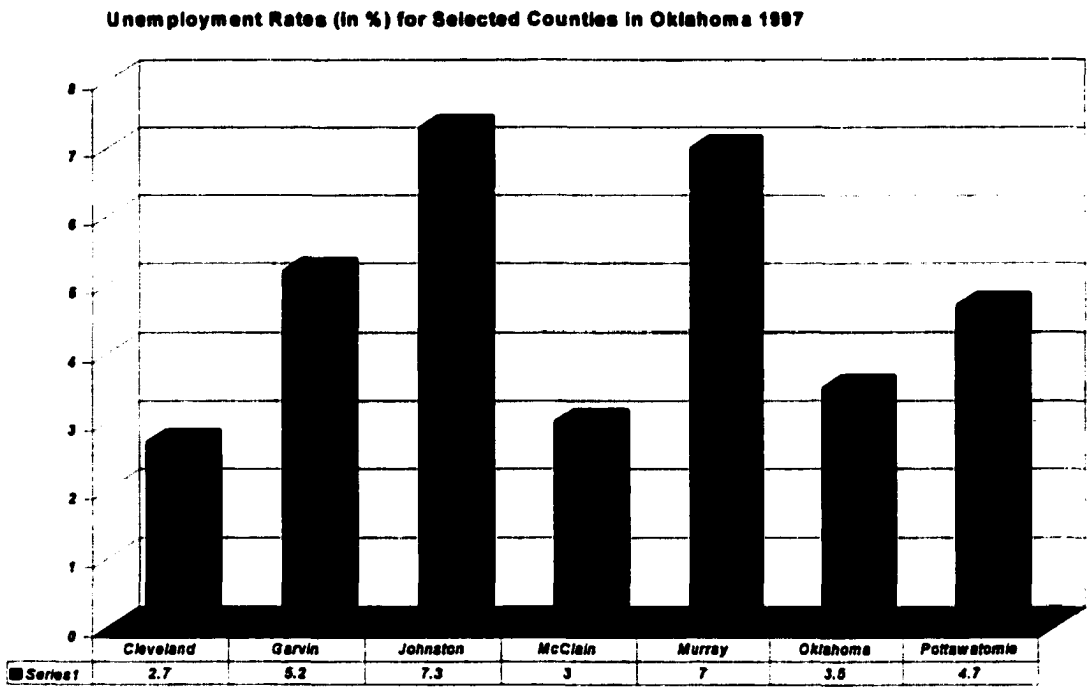
County	Total Special Education Students
Cleveland	4639
Garvin	839
Johnston	253
McClain	629
Murray	385
Oklahoma	14,047
Potawatomie	1503

Appendix I

County Deprivation Index: Rankings of 1996 (FY1997) Child AFDC/TANF Recipients Monthly Average

County	Average Monthly Count of Children	Percent of all Children
Cleveland County	1827	3.5%
Garvin County	607	8.9%
Johnston County	283	10.4%
McClain County	285	4.0%
Murray County	202	6.5%
Oklahoma County	17,135	10.4%
Pottawatomie County	1428	8.7%

Appendix J


Unemployment Rates (in %) for Selected Counties in Oklahoma 1997
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
Cleveland
Garvin
Johnston
McClain
Murray
Oklahoma
Pottawatomie
Series1
2.7
5.2
7.3
3
7
3.6
4.7